

# VIETNAM COURIER

December 1974

MONTHLY

New series

## Our Monthly

## Comment

**I**N this month of November, the mass movement against the Thieu regime in the towns and cities of South Viet Nam has continued to grow in intensity and fervour. There has been a redoubled militancy among the various sections of the population, particularly journalists and lawyers but even among opposition deputies.

Big rallies were held in Saigon and other cities to celebrate the anniversary of the overthrow of Ngo Dinh Diem (November 1). Thousands of Catholics took part in the torchlight parades and found themselves confronting the police in real street battles. The journalists organized a "Victimized Press Day," they gave wide publicity to the "Indictment No. 1" notwithstanding legal proceedings, burned copies of newspapers to avoid their seizure by the authorities and suspended publica-

tion as a sign of protest. Many lawyers offered their services to the accused journalists, hundreds of others have spoken out against Thieu's mockery of the principles of legality and justice. Opposition deputies signed petitions demanding Nguyen Van Thieu's resignation and called on the US Congress to denounce the use of US aid for the repression of the people.

In the face of this surging tide, US imperialism and its Saigon henchmen have been forced, little by little, to reveal their real face. Repressive measures, formerly veiled, are now openly taken. In anticipation of the mass demonstrations on the eve of November 1, 100,000 policemen were deployed in a Saigon heavily barricaded with barbed wire. Traffic was suspended in many quarters and the roads leading to the city

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were blocked by battalions of military police. The demonstrators were mercilessly manhandled, even old people and war invalids were not spared.

On November 2, the Saigon police opened fire at one thousand Catholics attending an anti-Thieu meeting at Chinh Tam church in Binh Tuy province, near Saigon. At least three people were killed and many others wounded.

Thieu has shown to what lengths he will go to pursue his policy: on November 1, he declared that "maximum order and security will be ensured." On November 12, in the bar-rack-room language dear to him, he insulted all the movements and opposition organizations, accusing them of being "communist" or "communist-inspired": "I will not allow this disorder to continue till the 1975 elections," he said. He made it clear that Catholic priests, Buddhist monks, even parliamentarians cannot engage in politics in the streets. "I shall use sticks and tanks against anyone who disturbs public order."

On the other hand, Thieu is trying to calm down the mass discontent by demagogic methods. Ministers and generals have been dismissed. On November 14, on his orders, the Saigon "Lower House" amended Decree-law 007 on the press. Apart from some minor alterations — reduction of bail, transfer of the authority to seize newspapers to the legislative organ — the regulations on the press remain just as draconian as before. Not a single journalist was deceived by this manoeuvre. Their answer was

immediate and unanimous: Decree-law 007 must be purely and simply annulled.

On November 16, Decree-law 060 on political parties was also amended by the "Lower House." This Decree-law, which is a product of the full powers seized by Thieu in 1972, institutionalizes, for all practical purposes, Thieu's Democratic Party as the sole political party and bans the setting up of all opposition parties, by requiring that, to be recognized, a party should have branches in half of the towns and provinces in South Viet Nam and a quarter of the hamlets and villages, that the party members should represent one-twentieth of the electors and that its obligatory candidates at parliamentary and presidential elections should obtain at least one-fifth of the votes. The amendments were nothing but a smokescreen, as they only reduce by one-third the percentages required. They were voted only by 67 deputies, or less than half of the "Lower House" which totals 156 members, many of them having boycotted the voting session.

It is clear that the urban population in the South want not just a simple reform, but the overthrow of Nguyen Van Thieu himself. The attempts made by US imperialism to deflect the mass movement from its objectives are doomed to failure. The suggestions made by some pro-US elements regarding the creation of a "national advisory body" while keeping Thieu as President of the Republic have been dismissed, as they deserve, by the main leaders of the mass organizations in Saigon. There

is a unanimous desire for the formation in Saigon of a Government of Union and National Concord prepared to strictly implement the Paris Agreement.

The military setbacks (1), the economic crisis, the political offensives of the urban masses, everything unites to hasten the downfall of the Thieu regime.

Gerald Ford, unelected President of the United States, and representative of a party which was pitifully beaten in the recent elections, has attempted, in a message sent to Nguyen Van Thieu on the occasion of Saigon "National Day," to give him assurances of White House support. However, it will not be easy for Ford to save Thieu from collapse. What he should do is to effect a change in US policy.

November 25, 1974

(1) According to the Liberation Press Agency, the balance-sheet of the military operations in September and October is as follows:

39,000 Saigon soldiers put out of action, 22 battalions, 80 companies and 170 platoons wiped out or decimated, 40 planes downed, 380 military vehicles and 45 trucks destroyed, 750 posts overrun or forced to be evacuated or surrendered. The number of units (battalions and companies) liquidated has increased by 50% compared with previous months, and so has the number of posts captured, including district capitals and military subsectors. The rate of desertion in the Saigon army has gone up by 30% whereas the number of raw recruits has decreased by 15%.

# The March of North Viet Nam's Agriculture towards Large-Scale Socialist Production

PHAM VAN DONG

*At the "Conference on Agriculture in the Delta and Mid-land Regions" held at the beginning of August, 1974 in Thai Binh, Prime Minister Pham Van Dong made an important speech.*

*The first part of his speech deals with "general problems of the march of agriculture towards large-scale socialist production" namely:*

- The extent and the limits of large-scale production.
- The advance towards large-scale production.
- The measures to be taken to achieve large-scale production.
- Socialist industrialization and the march of agriculture towards large-scale production.

*Following are the main points of the second part of this speech dealing with "practical and pressing problems" in the roles and tasks of different organizations at various levels.*



## I. THE AGRICULTURAL CO-OPERATIVES

It is necessary to increase the co-operatives' productive forces, that is, in essence, to increase their technical equipment so as to stabilize, consolidate and continuously perfect the socialist relations of production and, as a result, to make the fullest use of the co-operatives' possibilities.

These possibilities consist in:

— Specialization and intensive cultivation to achieve higher productivity and output, higher living standards for the co-operative members and constantly increasing accumulation for enlarged reproduction; building up strong co-operatives capable of further development, thus contributing to the construction of a socialist countryside.

— Fulfilment of all obligations towards the State, first of all, the delivery to the State of products from the co-operatives and peasant households. This obligation which should be defined and fixed on a solid basis constitutes an important policy of the State which must be strictly adhered to.

— Production of goods for export. Those co-operatives which have been engaged in this line of production should strive to make their products better,

those which have not should make a start in this field.

The fulfilment of these tasks will contribute to socialist industrialization and the building of strong and prosperous North Viet Nam and to the march towards national reunification by peaceful means.

These possibilities will multiply as agriculture marches towards large-scale socialist production, a process which began with agricultural co-operativization after the land reform.

Examining the experience of advanced co-operatives, we have learned the following points:

— These co-operatives regard the soil as an inexhaustible source from which all sorts of agricultural products can be obtained; they know how to improve and enrich the soil, making it ever more fertile even though it has never stopped producing, how to turn their fields into a single co-ordinated area and how to combine water control work with the construction of transport and communications systems.

— On the basis of an overall plan to exploit the land, they have taken a correct orientation towards

specialization and intensive cultivation (for higher productivity and an increased number of crops) and given special attention to planting and animal husbandry, production and processing of products, and different crafts closely related to agricultural production. In a word, they have determined the structure of production and other branches of activities which allow full use of the potentials of the land and labour. From this, they can work out production plans with positive, balanced and stable targets.

— In carrying out their production plans, all these advanced co-operatives have done well in one key aspect: labour management. They are able to mobilize the entire labour force of the co-operative which is encouraged to do any task entrusted by the co-operative with high efficiency, achieving a high quality at low cost. Rational labour management means a correct and just management of workdays and produce distribution. Effective labour management allows the effective management of technical cadres and the most efficient workers.

— The advanced co-operatives can manage all their activities and those of their members—production work, material and cultural life, customs and habits (marriages and funerals), etc.—in a rational and proper way. All this testifies to the important role of the co-operative in our ideological and cultural revolution and is a commendable achievement.

— Another lesson to be learned is the strengthening of the Party organization—giving the Party members a more important role while the role of the management committees of the co-operatives and the co-operative members' right "to be collective masters" are also enhanced—in order to promote the building of strong and solid co-operatives, increase production and be masters of the transformation of the countryside.

Thus, it is necessary to sum up, generalize and

propagate the experience of advanced co-operatives. This work, which must be done by each province, will help many other co-operatives in their efforts to catch up with the advanced co-operatives and will allow a large-scale campaign to be launched for the reorganization of production and improvement of co-operative management within the province. This will be a new development of great importance for the movement for agricultural co-operativization which will go forward on this basis.

The style of work of these advanced co-operatives convincingly proves that each of them is a multiplier, a magnificent multiplier, quantitatively (productivity, output), qualitatively (relations of production) and on a co-operative scale. In this connection, the productive forces constitute the fundamental factor. In the first place, man, the working man, is a productive force playing a great role: this is proved by the achievements of the advanced co-operatives. But here we want to speak of the material productive forces, chiefly the means of production, and the technical equipment which are the most dynamic and revolutionary factors. They push forward the development of production and under socialism they promote the stabilization, consolidation and perfection of the socialist relations of production. Conversely, the socialist relations of production require a further strengthening of the productive forces which then constitute a basis for an ever greater development of the relations of production.

Up to now, the socialist countries which preceded us have gained rich experience in the aid and support provided by the working class and the socialist states to agricultural co-operativization. We should learn from their experience. However, we have to start from our practical situation and sum up our own experience, in order to solve our problems in conformity with our requirements and capabilities.

## II. THE DISTRICT

**T**HIS is a new problem which must be urgently solved. The solution consists in the gradual consolidation and improvement of the district administration for this is in a position to guide directly all activities in the district, with the emphasis on economic activities and particularly agricultural production. The district administration must become a centre of technical equipment for agricultural co-operatives.

First of all, we must determine the position, role and tasks of the district administration and from this work out its structure and we must take all these into account in the organizational system of the Party and the State, from central, provincial and district down to village level. So far, the district has acted as an administrative institution with mainly administrative tasks. Now we must have a more correct and broader view: besides its administrative tasks, the district must take up the management of the economy, the direction of production and enterprises. As a result, its different management tasks must be defined. Naturally, in doing this, we must take into account the characteristics of each region, the plain, the midlands and the highlands. These regions differ from one another not only in the structure of their cultivation and

animal husbandry, in production and product processing works and in the structure of their extra-agricultural occupations, but also in economic and technical levels, in demographic conditions, in customs and habits, etc.

In spite of these differences, to which great attention must be paid, we must have a clear understanding of the important position and role of the district administration, for it assumes direct management of all activities in the district, in particular as regards the general economy, production work and the co-operatives. To fulfil these tasks, the district must be in close contact with the provincial administration and the responsible organizations at the central level.

Consequently, we can say that the role of the district as a centre of technical equipment must be closely linked with its role of economic management. It follows that the district administration is both a level of economic management and a centre of technical equipment. These two roles are inseparable and require the cadres responsible for the district to have economic and technical capabilities and knowledge. The term technical equipment covers a very wide field and essentially includes:

— The system of hydraulic works, transport and communications, electric networks, engineering, tractor and machine stations, centres for seeds, animal breeding and fodder supplies, agricultural product processing plants, warehouses, veterinary services, protection of vegetation, etc. These material and technical bases require a basic equipment which should be fixed and systematic.

— Technical facilities such as machines necessary for production and product processing; technical materials such as coal, lime, wood, iron and steel, chemical fertilizers, insecticides, mechanical, semi-mechanical and rudimentary instruments, building materials; means of transport and fuel.

— Research institutes, agricultural research and experimentation stations; these establishments can make practical contributions to the development of agriculture.

It is important to evaluate, classify and list according to priority the above-mentioned requirements, taking into account our limited resources. We can then draw up projects and plans for the construction of material and technical bases and the supply of technical equipment and materials suitable to the needs of each region in order to ensure fulfilment of the plan for the production of the most important and necessary agricultural products.

Now we can imagine how our agriculture will march towards large-scale socialist production. It must be achieved step by step and part by part, co-ordinating industry with agriculture, State-run economy with co-operative economy, the administration of economic branches with that of economic regions, the Party leadership and State management with grassroots action by our revolutionary and creative-minded masses.

Making the district a centre of technical equipment for agricultural co-operatives is at the present time the decisive link in this task. For the 252 districts of our country, the drawing up of practical projects and plans for technical equipment, maintaining a balance between our capabilities and our requirements, is a work of great importance and tremendous significance.

In addition, the strengthening of the technical equipment of the co-operatives will create fundamental internal factors promoting the extension of the scale of the co-operative. As the material and technical bases develop and the technical equipment is strengthened — for example, when the hydraulic system, the electric network, the tractor and machine stations and the engineering workshops develop and become productive forces of the co-operatives — the extension of the scale of the co-operatives will become an imperative need. It will be conditioned by the development of the productive forces: if brought about too early it is simply a quantitative change, if too late the development of co-operatives is impeded. We should also pay due attention to the economic and technical management capabilities of the responsible cadres for the co-operatives.

At the same time, we must foresee the development of each of the key branches of agriculture: cultivation, animal husbandry, production and product processing. The State, for instance, may set up a system of seed-producing or fodder preparation centres for collective and household animal husbandry, or a system of factories for processing products supplied by the co-operatives or the co-operative members (sweet potatoes, cassava, tobacco, rush, fish, etc.)

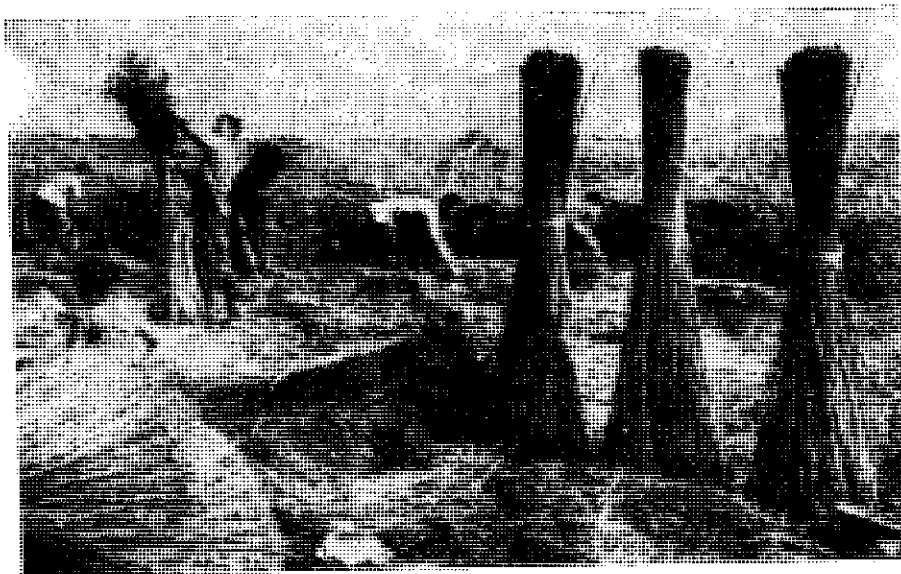
The development of this process depends on the characteristics of each region. It is therefore necessary to make careful investigations concerning economic profitability and consumption demands (output and its quality). For example, we can take special measures to rapidly strengthen the technical equipment of those co-operatives specializing in export products of great value.

To sum up, the march of our agriculture towards large-scale socialist production will gradually take shape in daily realities, in our reflections and in our researches.

Up to now, the district has been an administrative unit; the boundaries of a district have been defined for administrative purposes only, not for economics and production. This is irrational, but we should not make any hasty changes in this regard. What is necessary and practical is to determine, within the present territorial boundaries of



*On the fields of Minh Sinh farming co-operative in Ha Tay province*



*Rush harvest at Tay Bac co-operative in Ninh Binh province.*

the district and on the basis of the regional characteristics cited above, its range of activities and production structure. Despite the differences, at times very great, in structures and regional characteristics, the production structure of a district is generally composed of agriculture, which is the main activity, small industry and handicrafts. In our countryside, as agriculture constitutes the main branch of the economy, its development and its march towards large-scale socialist production naturally leads to the balanced development of other branches: industry, transport and communications and capital construction, particularly in those branches directly serving collectivized agriculture.

In the strengthening of technical equipment to bring into being larger-scale agricultural co-operatives emphasis must be placed on the following two points:

1. The co-operatives must make necessary preparations so as to be able to use new technical equipment. These preparations include those made in the fields of production organization and management in order that the level and capabilities of the co-operatives should be sufficient for the new productive forces. For example, the use of tractors requires the co-operatives to create the prerequisites and favourable conditions for their use such as the re-arrangement of the fields, the construction of better roads and revision of production plans.

That is to say the co-operatives must realize that their fundamental and long-term interests require them to make careful preparations before receiving tractors.

2. The co-operatives must anticipate the problems that are likely to crop up as a result of the utilization of new equipment and get ready to solve them. It is impossible to detect these problems overnight. They will only be recognized gradually through practice. What is essential is to be dynamic, to find out problems and solve them. Special attention should be paid to the problem of the surplus labour force resulting from the use of such new equipment. This is an inevitable outcome which will lead to a new division of labour, a rational redistribution of the labour force for the promotion of socialist industrialization and a more balanced distribution of the labour force over the whole territory of North Viet Nam (for instance by setting up new economic areas in the midlands and mountainous regions).

All that has been said gives us a particularly vivid picture of the importance of the worker-peasant alliance, the inter-dependence of socialist industrialization and the march of agriculture towards large-scale socialist production. This is a march, which has the character of a law, towards socialist construction in North Viet Nam, starting from a backward agricultural economy.

### III. THE CENTRAL ADMINISTRATION

**W**E must strengthen the productive forces of the co-operatives and build the district into a centre of technical equipment for the co-operatives, so as to take agriculture steadily, step by step, to large-scale socialist production. However, the tempo and quality of this work largely depend on the contributions of the services of the central administration, chiefly those responsible for economic and financial management and for the supply of technical materials.

First, let us speak of the Central Committee of Agriculture (formerly the Ministry of Agriculture).

This organ must make a synthesis of agricultural production plans on a national scale including plans of investment, technical equipment and capital constructions for agriculture. Together with the State Planning Committee, it should study these plans and discuss them so as to reach an identity of view between the two committees. These plans, once endorsed by the responsible State organ, will become an integral part of the State plan, which constitutes the second Programme of the Party and the revolutionary will of the people.

Attached to the Central Committee of Agriculture

is a service with a very important role in the advance of agriculture towards large-scale socialist production: the General Department of Technical Equipment and Agricultural Mechanization. This Department is in charge of the planning of technical equipment for agriculture.

The following tasks must be distributed and coordinated among various responsible central organs which will have to fulfil them at all costs, step by step and part by part, thus laying a basis for better and better results:

— To draw up legislation on the protection and utilization of land. This is a vital task which must be done both from the higher down to the lower level and vice versa. Misappropriation, loss, waste and wrecking of land, particularly in the plains, will not be tolerated.

— To determine and stabilize the obligatory contributions of all agricultural enterprises and all individuals who live on agriculture: State farms, co-operatives, co-op members and individual farmers. These obligatory contributions are designed to ensure supplies to the towns, industrial centres, areas of industrial cultivation and forest exploitation and to finance socialist industrialization.

— To carry out the technical equipment of agriculture. This task is of prime importance. As a matter of fact, technical equipment and the building of the material and technical bases for agriculture are the responsibilities of certain branches such as hydraulics, electricity, coal, engineering, transport and communications, building, forestry, etc.

— To take all necessary measures to help, support and stimulate agriculture. These measures cover a large field of action, the most essential being:

a) *Prices*: State-purchase prices of agricultural products, prices of the means of production to be supplied and of consumer goods. The price policy should be properly applied so as to have positive effects on agricultural production and at the same time conform to the interests of socialist industrialization.

b) *Exports*: so far, this task has not been carried out well. We should strive for better and better results. The main responsibility again rests with the agricultural producers. Emphasis should also be laid on the measures to stimulate production for export, among them ways and means to create favourable conditions for export production. The

responsible cadres of the Foreign Trade Ministry must pay great attention to this important and urgent problem.

c) *Credit*: this is a lever which helps promote agriculture and develop it in the direction of large-scale socialist production. On the basis of the experience drawn from the past, the branches concerned, above all the financial and banking services, should use appropriate measures and means to facilitate an effective application of the credit policy for agriculture. In this respect, the State Bank should form a specialized organ which must have a deep understanding of the general problems of agricultural production and the specific problems of each region and each link in agricultural production.

— To train cadres in colleges and vocational middle schools. They will become scientific and technical workers and management cadres for agriculture. It is necessary to re-examine the system of training, with a view to a rational reorganization and relocation of schools throughout the country.

This will allow teaching and studying to be combined with agricultural production in each specific region so that after leaving school the students can swiftly adapt themselves to their new job.

— To carry out researches on agronomy and agricultural technique. By laying emphasis on this task, we only want to remind the organs concerned of their responsibilities in organizing and overseeing research services and research workers, in order to achieve practical results.

— To carry out economic management of agriculture. Much more attention should be given to this work which requires the setting up of a specialized organ. This organ should make great efforts in order to solve the complex immediate and future problems in the economic management of agriculture.

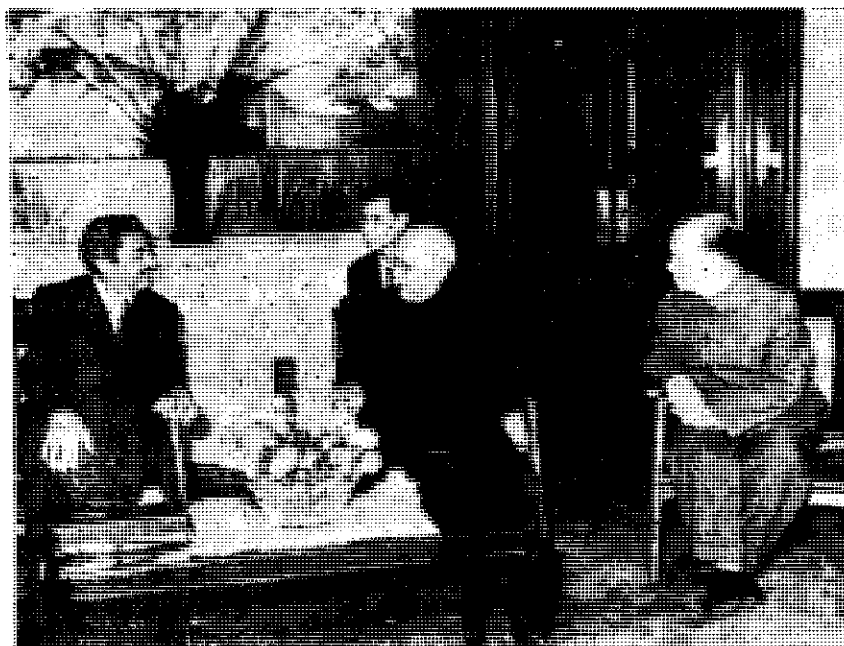
— To strengthen socialist legislation. The march of agriculture to large-scale socialist production means the strengthening of State control through socialist legislation. Therefore, strenuous, persevering efforts are required to build up socialist legislation, step by step and part by part, in accordance with its role and function. In this work, the State Legislative Committee must make a concrete and effective contribution.



*At the Ba Vi cow breeding centre in Ha Tay province*

Salem Rubaya Ali, Chairman of the Presidential Council of the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen, paid an official visit to the DRVN from November 23 to 25, 1974.

Photo : DRVN President Ton Duc Thang and Chairman of the DRVN National Assembly Truong Chinh receive Chairman Salem Rubaya Ali.



## *The DRVN Advances*

### ● For the 1975 Athletics Competition

Since April 1974, a nation-wide movement for physical training and sports has been launched by the General Department for Physical Culture and Sports. Responding to this movement, millions of people are taking part in daily physical exercises. Athletic days have been held with traditional wrestling and boxing, cross-country race, swimming and shooting, in different localities, in preparation for the 1975 athletics competition.

In Hanoi, many competitions have been held recently:

#### *Football :*

All-North Viet Nam C. class football teams

competition: After taking part in preliminary heats, 16 teams competed in the semifinals and finals.

#### *Table Tennis :*

The People's Army 1974 Table Tennis Competition was attended by 66 players (17 women) representing different armed services and military regions.

#### *The Second Shooting Contest :*

It was attended by over 100 marksmen and women from 15 localities and branches.

#### *Swimming Competition :*

Nation-wide competition for youth and children, attended by 200 people of both sexes.

### ● Hanoi Classes for Amateur Writers and Artists attended by 200 people of both sexes

To encourage the literary and artistic movement among amateurs the Hanoi Cultural Service is concerned to raise the artistic level of amateur artists working in factories, offices, etc., in the city and its suburbs.

Since 1960 the Hanoi House of Popular Arts, with the help of Hanoi Trade-Unions, has organized annual classes for amateur writers and artists in which they can study literature, painting, sculpture, script writing, song, music, dance, etc. These classes are attended by workers, farmers and cadres who love arts and literature and want to improve their knowledge about their preferred field.

In these classes they are helped by professional writers and artists.

This year has seen an upsurge of creative activity from those attending these classes who have created tens of poems and short stories, 30 plays and scripts for popular theatre (*Cheo*) and reformed theatre (*Cai Luong*), 17 songs, 4 dances, etc.

The best works of the sculpture section were sent to the National Sculpture Exhibition and some of the plays are being staged by professional theatrical groups.



# Washington and the Fate of the Puppet Regimes in Saigon

FROM Ngo Dinh Diem to Nguyen Van Thieu, a series of governments have succeeded one another in Saigon. Their

existence and disappearance are a faithful reflection of Washington's successive strategies towards its puppets in South Viet Nam.

## Washington's Dissatisfaction with Diem

ON November 1, 1963, a group of Saigon army generals overthrew Ngo Dinh Diem and killed him and his brother Ngo Dinh Nhu. This event did not simply put an end to the activities of one individual; it marks an important turning-point in US policy towards its henchmen in Saigon. Who killed the Diem-Nhu brothers? And why was it necessary?

The death sentence pronounced against Diem-Nhu in 1963 dates back to 1960 when the overwhelming majority of the South Vietnamese people rose up in arms in a broad concerted movement against the dictatorial regime. It was in 1960, too, that the infighting among the Saigon rulers reached a peak, leading to the abortive coup d'état of November 11, 1960 by a number of army officers and opposition elements. After that the Saigon regime found itself facing an acute crisis which marked an American failure of strategic significance.

After a tour of inspection of South Viet Nam, Maxwell Taylor, who was then chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, wrote: "It was no exaggeration to say that the entire country was suffering from a collapse of national morale." (1)

At that time, the American authorities began to contemplate a change of policies and horses. E. Durbrow, US Ambassador to Saigon, cabled to the State Department: "If Diem's position in country continues deteriorate as result failure adopt proper political, psychological, economic and security measures, it may

become necessary for US government to begin consideration alternative courses of action and leaders in order to achieve our objective." (2)

The US met with no success in their attempts to repress the revolutionary movement of the South Vietnamese people through the agency of a puppet government and an army of local mercenaries constituted from the crumbling foundations left behind by the French colonialists. Meanwhile, the situation in Laos was deteriorating for the US, and GIs had to be dispatched to Thailand. In a memorandum sent on May 10, 1961 to Secretary of Defense McNamara, the Joint Chiefs of Staff suggested that "US forces should be deployed immediately to South Vietnam" to prevent a situation similar to that existing in Laos (3). But President Kennedy adopted another method within the framework of his "flexible response" strategy—"special war." This consisted in increasing the number of advisers, introducing some units of "special forces," together with air and naval support forces for the puppet army which was equipped with new weapons, enlarged from 170,000 to 200,000 men and provided with modern technical means to fight guerrilla warfare such as helicopters and M. 113 and M. 118 amphibious cars.

This change of policy could not be brought about without a change in the structural organization of the Saigon regime.

The general feeling in Washington at that time was that "We can't win with Diem." (4) The

brothers Diem and Nhu hailed from a family of feudal mandarins who had served the Hue court for many generations. Diem himself was a former mandarin whose exploits in counter-revolutionary repression had brought him to the highest rank in the royal court. The Diem brothers' collaborators were all either from the Ngo or the Tran family (that of Tran Van Chuong, the father of Tran Le Xuan, Nhu's wife and Diem's sister-in-law, another big feudal family in the North). These two families represented the class of feudal landlords who, after their failure in North and Central Viet Nam, had gone South in 1954 in the wake of the French troops. Diem's Vice-President was Nguyen Ngoc Tho, a big landlord in the Mekong Delta. The victories won in the resistance war of 1945-1954 in this area had enabled the people's power to carry out its land policy such as reduction of land rent, confiscation of land belonging to the French colonialists and traitors to the country (most of them landlords) and the distribution of this land to the poor peasants. These measures had driven almost all the landlords to leave the countryside and take refuge in the urban centres controlled by the aggressors. Working hand in glove with Diem were the comprador bourgeoisie, products of the French colonial regime who were growing rich as a result of the American penetration into the South; they were political opportunists and adventurers who easily turned their coats. The Diem's regime was also supported by the Catholic Mission and especially the Catholics coming from the North. In Saigon Diem built up a state apparatus which enabled him to concentrate most of the power in his own hands and those of his brother Nhu; that apparatus was an improved form of the old machine inherited from the Bao Dai puppet regime. In the countryside, after the regrouping of the people's armed forces in the

North, Diem set up a despotic administrative system controlled largely by landlords who returned in order to take back the land and power they had lost to the peasants during the resistance war. They nursed a deep hatred for the people and profited by the "denounce communists" campaign to take savage revenge on them. Diem and Nhu also set up political organizations such as the "Labour and Personalism" Party, "Republican Youth" and "Women's Association" to strengthen their coercive machinery.

Since 1954, all power was in the hands of Ngo Dinh Diem who was President of the Republic, Commander-in-Chief of the army, and in direct charge of the Ministry of National Defence and a dozen other important organs. The Saigon army, left behind by the French and strengthened by the Americans as means of terrorizing the population, proved a docile tool in the hands of Ngo Dinh Diem and his civilian assistants. Up to 1960-1961, the situation did not create any great difficulties for the Americans, because the popular opposition to the regime was expressed only through political actions and could be easily crushed by Diem's repressive forces. But the whole apparatus in the countryside disintegrated when the peasants took up arms and seized back their land. It can be said that feudalism-landlordism, the social foundation of the Diem regime, was essentially liquidated in the countryside in the years 1959-1960. After the concerted uprisings, the anti-Diem struggle grew into a real war. The Americans needed a more efficient war machine, they wanted to give the Saigon army commanders a greater role and to militarize South Viet Nam for the purpose of serving their war efforts. At the end of 1961, presenting the Pentagon's view to the White House, Maxwell Taylor stressed that it was necessary to take direct control of the puppet troops and the conduct of the war, that is to dispense with civilian control. "To execute this program of limited partnership requires a change in the charter, the spirit and the organization of the MAAG in South Viet Nam. It must be shifted from an advisory group to something nearer—but not quite—an operational headquarters in a theater of war. The US should become a limited partner in the war." (5)

And so a change of structure for the Saigon regime became a necessity. Diem's civilian dictatorship should be replaced by a military dictatorship controlled by the Saigon army top commanders. However, a change of horses in midstream could prove risky for the US, as it was difficult to find a replacement better than Diem, who was differently viewed by US officialdom in Saigon and Washington. In this situation, the solution put forward by Lansdale early in 1961 was approved: go on using Ngo Dinh Diem "at least until a more promising leader appeared upon the scene" (6). US aid would be increased

as a means to bring pressure to bear on Diem and compel him to carry out reform in the military and political fields, particularly to give the military commanders more freedom of action without being bothered by the provincial chiefs (7), to allow the opposition organizations to carry out activities as a "safety valve" to appease the anger of the urban population (8), and to let the US set up an operational command to take charge of the whole war effort (9). The authorities in Washington also hoped to discard Nhu and keep Diem merely as a figurehead (10) with real power in the hands of the military commanders.

### Ap Bac and the Death of Diem and Nhu

**N**OTWITHSTANDING the great efforts deployed between 1961 and the beginning of 1963, the special war was not making any progress. The Staley-Taylor "pacification" plan could not prevent the revolutionary organizations and liberation armed forces from developing both in quantity and in quality till they controlled over 67% of the villages. The prestige of the South Viet Nam National Front for Liberation spread far and wide and, as the Pentagon partially admitted, it won over some of Diem's opponents in the urban centres. (11)

1963 saw a series of heavy blows inflicted by the patriotic forces on the Saigon army. In the famous Ap Bac battle of January 2, 1963 such modern war means as helicopters and amphibious cars proved unable to wipe out a small guerilla unit—on the contrary, the enemy suffered heavy losses (6 helicopters downed, 15 others damaged and 3 amphibious cars destroyed). Furthermore, Washington could see that, however much the American advisors on the battlefield pushed them, the puppet troops were unwilling to fight. The puppet commanders were incapable and Diem's war machine was shown to be ineffective. It was still hampered by the civil authorities at province and district level and the operations plans worked out by the US command took a long time to reach the army units. The battle of Ap Bac was followed by other victories of the patriotic forces, such as Cho Gao (July

7) and Quan Long (July 20), in My Tho province, or Tan Tru (July 1) in Long An province. In these engagements, surmounting great difficulties, the guerillas succeeded in neutralizing the effects of helicopters and amphibious cars on which the enemy pinned great hopes. With regard to Diem and Nhu, though they had carried out some superficial reforms to please their bosses (such as holding presidential elections and allowing lists of opposition candidates, reshuffling the government), yet in all essentials they clung to their despotism and nepotism. When his position became dangerous as a result of the worsening military situation in November, 1961, Diem decreed an indefinite state of emergency, strangled all democratic liberties, curbed the activities of the opposition, moved army officers around and kept some combat units in Saigon to protect him, thus creating acute internal tension especially between the civilian administration and the military command and among US officialdom in South Viet Nam. Diem's civilian dictatorship rigged up by the US thus became a stumbling block in their prosecution of the war. The question now was how to remove it. In autumn 1963, capitalizing on the struggle of the Buddhists which had led to Diem's complete isolation, the CIA gave the green light to the army commanders to engineer a coup d'état. Diem was thus overthrown and he and his brother Nhu were killed.

## The Old Generals on the Wane

**A**FTER discarding Diem and Nhu, the Americans were most eager to set up an effective military and political machine to save their special war, which was faring badly. At that time all powers were in the hands of the Revolutionary Military Council headed by General Duong Van Minh. Nguyen Ngoc Tho, Vice-President under the Diem regime, was made Prime Minister, but he had to obey the baton of the generals who kept all the principal ministries under their own control.

Four days after Kennedy's death, Johnson, the new master of the White House, made it clear that he was resolved to win the Viet Nam war. In fact, with this new team of henchmen it was much easier for the US to strengthen the armed forces and take over all direction of the war as well as tactical command on the battlefields. A plan was set afoot to bring the special war to a head by extending military action to North Viet Nam and the whole of Indochina. (12)

However, the situation developed contrary to the expectations of the Americans. From September 1963, the liberation armed forces had hit hard at the "pacification" plan, smashing the system of strategic villages and military posts. 382 posts and blockhouses were wiped out in November 1963 and the following month saw 1,869 strategic hamlets dismantled. In the provinces bordering on Saigon, such as Long An and Dinh Tuong, the "pacification" program had proved a pitiful failure. After an inspection tour, McNamara admitted: "The situation has in fact been deteriorating in the countryside since July. The Viet Cong now controls very high proportions of the people in certain key provinces, particularly those directly south and west of Saigon." (13) Despite all this, the puppet generals did not take concrete measures to save the pacification program (14). Engrossed in their own power struggle, they did not pay enough attention to the prosecution of the war. (15)

In the eyes of the Americans, the generals thus hoisted into power to establish this new militarist regime were not very dependable men. Minh, Don, Kim, Xuan stemmed from bourgeois families in Nam Bo and were the

first native officers in the French expeditionary corps, trained and promoted by the French, consequently they could not be loyal to the Americans and did not see eye to eye with them regarding the conduct of the war (especially the "pacification program." Furthermore, the neutralist tendency, which was gaining ground in urban centres at that time, had an influence on some generals in power, a fact which caused great anxiety in Washington. In his memo sent on December 21, 1963 to L.B. Johnson, McNamara wrote: "The situation is very disturbing. Current trends unless reversed in the next 2-3

months, will lead to neutralization at best and more likely to a communist-controlled state. The government is the greatest source of concern. It is indecisive and drifting" (16). This assessment of the situation was a death warrant to the Saigon rulers and gave the green light to the CIA to prepare a plot to topple them. On January 30, 1964 General Khanh and General Khiem, the army corps commanders and their clique overthrew the Minh-Tho government in a bloodless coup. The leading members of the Revolutionary Military Council were kept under house arrest, except Minh who was appointed President of the Republic by Nguyen Khanh, a purely nominal function.

## The "American Boy"

**A**FTER the overthrow of "Big" Minh by Nguyen Khanh; a succession of governments followed one another in Saigon: military-civilian, with the participation of some political parties (with Khanh as Prime Minister and Nguyen Ton Hoan, leader of the Dai Viet party, as his deputy) or civilian non-party (with Phan Khac Suu as Chief of State and Tran Van Huong as Premier), or civilian one-party (with Phan Huy Quat of the Dai Viet party as Prime Minister). All these "civilian" ornaments were aimed at appeasing public opinion in the US and placating the opposition of the reactionary political groups outside the army and the different sections of the population. The actual power was entirely in the hands of the military commanders whom the Americans wanted to use to set up a militarist dictatorial regime.

Khanh was firmly supported by the US which created all the necessary conditions for him to survive and the means to foil any opposition. Maxwell Taylor, who was then chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, wrote: "For the present, the Khanh government has the necessary military support to stay in power" (17), and the Pentagon also clarified its attitude: "We fully support the Khanh government and are totally opposed to any further coups." (18) That was not all. In March 1964, Johnson sent McNamara and Taylor to South Viet Nam, as a conspicuous move to back Nguyen Khanh who was

mockingly addressed by Taylor as the "American boy" (19).

As head of the puppet army and administration, Nguyen Khanh did everything the Americans wanted to step up the war. On February 1, 1964, that is two days after his coming to power, Khanh signed Decree No 93 by which he outlawed all communist and neutralist organizations and individuals. He showed himself everywhere, scouring the battlefields to accelerate military operations and the "pacification" of seven provinces around Saigon. He launched the "March North" campaign to speed up the Pentagon's plan of striking at North Viet Nam (20). Khanh had thus become a useful tool very ready to work for the objectives of the Americans. In this respect McNamara wrote: "Although its [the Khanh government's] top layer is thin, it is highly responsive to US advice, and with a good grasp of the basic elements of rooting out the Viet Cong." (21)

Nevertheless, on the battlefields, despite the heavy equipment supplied by the US, the puppet troops continued to be heavily beaten. The pacification program was constantly harassed and the operations to clear the provinces around Saigon had failed, opening the city to the direct attack of the patriotic forces (22). The morale of the puppet troops was sagging (23).

(Continued on page 18)

## New Developments in Viet Nam-Laos Solidarity and Co-operation

**T**HE annual That Luong fair in Vientiane was held this year in the last two weeks of October, under the theme of "Peace, Concord and Development." It was the first time the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam had participated in the fair and its pavilion attracted large numbers of visitors. Its displays, which showed engineering products, manufactured goods and artistic objects and included an exhibition on public welfare, acquainted our Lao friends with the Vietnamese people's national character and spirit of self-reliance in national construction during and after the victorious war against US aggression. Many pictures, photos and exhibits highlighted the close solidarity and fraternal co-operation between the two countries, Viet Nam and Laos, as well as the Vietnamese people's respect and love for the Lao people and for peace and national concord in Laos.

On October 30, 1974, the DRVN pavilion was honoured with the visit of the King of Laos Sri Savang Vatthana, Prince Souphanouvong, Acting Premier Phoumi Vongvichit and several other personalities. The King welcomed the DRVN's participation in the That Luong fair and praised the Vietnamese people's achievements in national construction as shown by the exhibits.

Since the formation of the Provisional Government of National Union and the National Political Council of Coalition, the solidarity between Viet Nam and Laos, of which the DRVN's participation in the That Luong fair is one example among many, has seen a strong development.

In August 1974 negotiations were held in Hanoi between a Laos Civil Aviation delegation headed by Prince Sisouphanou-

vong, and a Viet Nam Civil Aviation delegation headed by Mr Hoang Ngoc Dieu. The delegations discussed an amended agreement on civil aviation between the DRVN and the Kingdom of Laos and the resumption of the Vientiane-Hanoi air-link established in 1963 but temporarily interrupted during the US war of aggression in Laos.

In October 1974, negotiations were held in Hanoi between the Laos Posts and Telecommunications delegation headed by Minister of Posts Khampheng Boupha, and the Viet Nam Posts delegation headed by Minister Dang Thi which ended in the signing of an Agreement on Posts and Telecommunications Links between the two countries.

Particularly important were the negotiations on the DRVN's aid to Laos and co-operation between the two countries held in Hanoi in September 1974 between the Provisional Government of National Union's Economic Delegation headed by the Minister for Economy and Planning, Soth Phetrasi, and a Vietnamese Economic Delegation headed by Minister Dang Thi.

After a series of discussions marked with a spirit of close friendship and mutual understanding, the two parties signed several important documents on September 18, 1974 among which were:

- Agreement on co-operation in the construction of a road leading from Laos to the Vietnamese coast.

- Agreement allowing Laos to transport goods in transit through the DRVN.

- Protocol on transport of goods for Laos in the 1974-75 dry season.

- Protocol on making repairs to Route 7 between the Viet Nam-Laos frontier and Salaphoukhoun.

- Agreement on gratis aid from the DRVN to Laos in goods such as rice, cloth, medicament, cement, salt, films, etc.

- Protocol on the DRVN's grant of 100 scholarships to Lao students for the two academic years of 1974-75 and 1975-76.

Commenting on the conclusion of the above documents, Vice-Minister for Communication and Public Works, Humphan Sayasit, Deputy Head of the Provisional Government of National Union's Economic Delegation, said: "When we consider the economic situation of the DRVN we see that this is an assistance that comes from the heart. The aid is of great political significance for the future of the Lao economy and will help further develop the friendly relations between the two countries." (VNA, Oct. 13, 1974). In its broadcast on the evening of October 11, 1974, *Vientiane Radio* remarked: "The Agreements which have been signed are designed to help Laos overcome the present privations in the people's life and to carry out economic rehabilitation and long-range post-war national construction."

With the US imperialist intervention and aggression defeated, there is no longer any obstruction to the nations on the Indochina peninsula developing friendly relations and mutual co-operation, in the spirit of respect for each other's independence and sovereignty. The recently established links between the DRVN and the Kingdom of Laos are clearly beneficial to both countries and to peace and security in the region. They will surely grow more and more close.



*Accompanied by the DRVN Ambassador to Laos, Le Van Hien, the King of Laos Sri Savang Vatthana and Prince Souphanouvong visit the Vietnamese pavilion at the That Luong Fair in Vientiane (October 30, 1974).*

## FACTS AND EVENTS :

### **Advice to Parliamentarians : No Immunity on the Public Highway !**

The Saigonese parliamentarians still have full freedom to engage in politics — but only within four walls. Outside, they may find that they have lost their immunity and that misfortune is lying in wait for them at street corners.

That "clarification" was made by Thieu on November 12 in a speech delivered at the Saigon Ministry of Information.

"The legislators are only granted immunity in their offices," he said. "They cannot disturb public order by carrying politics (*sic*) onto the streets."

In the same speech, he reminded everyone that the place of Catholic priests is "in their churches," the place of Buddhist bonzes is "in their pagodas" and the place of deputies is "in the National Assembly."

So that is where the rub is !

For the last three months, the towns and cities under Thieu's control have been in effervescence. Catholics, Buddhists, deputies and senators,

writers, journalists, intellectuals and students and other sections of the population have turned out into the streets for meetings and demonstrations against Thieu's regime described by them as dictatorial, corrupt and bellicose.

The Popular Movement against Corruption has been instigated by the Catholics.

The Movement for National Reconciliation by the Buddhists.

The Movement for Freedom of the Press and Publication by the journalists.

Then, to mention only the best-known, there is the Front Against Famine and the Movement for the Implementation of the Paris Agreement. It's the mass movement that frightens Thieu, for it poses a serious threat to his regime. And he did not wait till his warning was uttered before beginning to crush the opposition.

On October 31, when Catholics met under the leadership of a priest in Tan Sa Chau church, Saigon, to con-

demn corruption, Thieu sent his police there: the reverend father and many deputies were beaten black and blue.

On November 2, when social injustices were denounced in a mass rally at the Catholic village of Binh Tuy, Thieu police opened fire, killing one person and injuring many others.

More recently, an opposition deputy was the victim of a traffic accident in most dubious circumstances.

All this proves that Thieu is only interested in giving his subjects democratic liberties... in camera. But in the Saigon House of Representatives Thieu's "democracy" is sometimes practised in a strange manner. The other day, during a heated debate, one deputy took out his pistol and shot (at the ceiling, fortunately !) to silence his adversaries. It transpires that this impetuous trigger-happy politician is one of Thieu's men bearing the evocative nickname of "Nhu bang ! bang !". He made use of his weapon to defend his boss's policy !

# The Struggle of the Saigon Press

"NEVER, in the history of the world press, has there been a situation similar to that of the Vietnamese press as regards the number of legal actions brought against it since the promulgation of Law 19-69 on December 30, 1969 amended on August 4, 1972 by Decree-law 007/TT-SLU."

This bitter comment of a Saigon barrister, published in the Saigon paper *Song Than* of October 24, 1974, gives some idea of the situation of the Saigon press under the Thieu regime.

Law 19-69 and Decree-law 007/TT-SLU are the two ordinances which now govern the Saigon press by gagging it. The situation has become so bad that, in order to survive, all journalists of whatever tendency have, for the first time, made a common

front and launched an open revolt which is still growing strongly.

Of these two laws, it is Decree-law 007/TT-SLU which is particularly under attack. Promulgated in 1972, it amends Law 19-69 in a very clearly fascist direction. On the night of June 27, 1972, in face of an imminent military and political catastrophe as a result of the general offensive of the revolutionary forces, Thieu succeeded, through his henchmen in the Saigon "National Assembly," in extorting a grant of full presidential powers for a period of six months. This gave him a free hand to issue about sixty decree-laws in rapid succession, further restricting all so-called "democratic liberties" and strengthening his personal dictatorship.

buted by the director himself (Article 37-A) and 50 million if the distribution is carried out by other people (Article 37-B). Thieu's design is clearly apparent: it will be difficult for the opposition papers to find distributors.

Any article liable to endanger "national security," "public order" or "good morals" and all offences against Decree-law 007/TT-SLU will result in the paper's seizure, followed "within eight days" by a legal action and possible punishments ranging from fines of 10,000 to 5 million piastres, and one month's to five years' imprisonment. The fine is automatically deducted from the money already deposited but the director or distributor of the paper is obliged to make good the balance of the amount "within a fortnight." Otherwise, the publication of the paper will be regarded as "voluntarily suspended," and its distribution service as "voluntarily closed down." If publication of the paper continues its directors is liable to 6 months' to 3 years' imprisonment and a fine of 500,000 to 5 million piastres.

It is specified that the paper can be seized *before or during* its distribution. If the paper is seized for a second time, the Minister of the Interior can order its temporary suspension pending the decision of the tribunal.

From January 1, 1970 to September 15, 1974, there were 3,048 seizures of Saigon daily papers and periodicals of which 2,572 cases were brought before the tribunal and 1,835 fined. These are the conditions in which Saigon journalists have to work—people who are, moreover, not "communists," since communism has

## Criminals by Presumption

LAW 19-69 instituted a system of security money for the press the amount of which was increased by Article 4 of Decree-law 007/TT-SLU. Before being authorized to publish, a daily paper must give a security of 20 million piastres and a periodical a security of 10 million. This obligatory deposit is to pay the eventual fines levied for any breach of the same decree-law. This, as *Song Than* bitterly remarked, "is like demanding the buyer of a car to give a deposit to the Treasury at the time of purchase to pay for any 'future' contravention of the traffic regulation."

At the very least this curious stipulation is absurd. It is a discriminatory measure against the press, compared, for instance, with the treatment of traders and manufacturers who, as *Dong Phuong*, another Saigon paper, commented, "do not have to deposit any money in anticipation of eventual punishment by the tribunal." Thus, under Thieu, all journalists are considered as potential criminals.

Decree-law 007/TT-SLU is aimed not only at newspaper directors but also at distributors. The security money is 5 million piastres for dailies and 2.5 million for periodicals if the paper is distri-

been outlawed by the 1967 "Constitution."

The press, said one Saigon daily, must at any moment expect "sudden death," "violent death" or "slow death," on account of the permanent threat of seizures which hangs over its head like a sword of Damocles.

"Every day," the Saigon paper *Dien Tin* wrote, "towards 4 p.m. a shudder runs through all the editorial offices at the thought of possible seizure." 4 p.m. is the time when the paper comes out and distribution begins.

Law 19-69 requires daily papers to send all the drafts of their articles to the Information Service two hours before the paper is distributed. In his Decree-law 007-TT/SLU Thieu lengthened the time to four hours. The dailies submit their drafts at noon so it is only at 4 p.m. — if all goes well — that the paper can come out. Thus it reaches the readers in the centre of Saigon toward 4.30 p.m. and the suburbs at 5 p.m. The provinces receive the papers only the next noon or evening, because public transport leaving Saigon stops at 4 p.m.

Therefore if an important event takes place at 1 p.m. it will not be published for nothing can be added or modified to the drafts which have already been submitted. Thus a daily newspaper will always be much later than the government radio in news reporting. When it is necessary to direct or influence public opinion to its own advantage, the administration will be in a favourable position.

It is during the period of four hours instituted by Decree-law 007/ST-SLU that the paper is

censured or seized. With regard to censorship, the paper *Dien Tin* wrote, on October 31, 1974: "The authorities, acting counter to the aspirations of the people, have maintained and even strengthened the system of censorship. At the same time, as they want to present a facade of democratic liberties to public opinion in the country and in the world, they have chosen another word to describe it: now it is called 'voluntary removal'. Sentences, paragraphs and pages must not be

left blank; they are to be filled up with the words 'voluntary removal'... 'voluntary removal'... The authorities want to fool public opinion; they are trampling justice underfoot at the same time as they are demanding that people should respect the law... To demand that a person performs an act against his own free will while forcing him to describe this as a 'voluntary' act, such behaviour could not be found among any person who still preserved a sense of honesty."

### Seizures, Arrests and Assaults

**L**AW 19-69 and especially Decree-law 007/TT-SLU has made use of very incorrect and sometimes extravagant and fantastic interpretations of words such as "national security," "public order," "good morals" to legalize every arbitrary act of the regime.

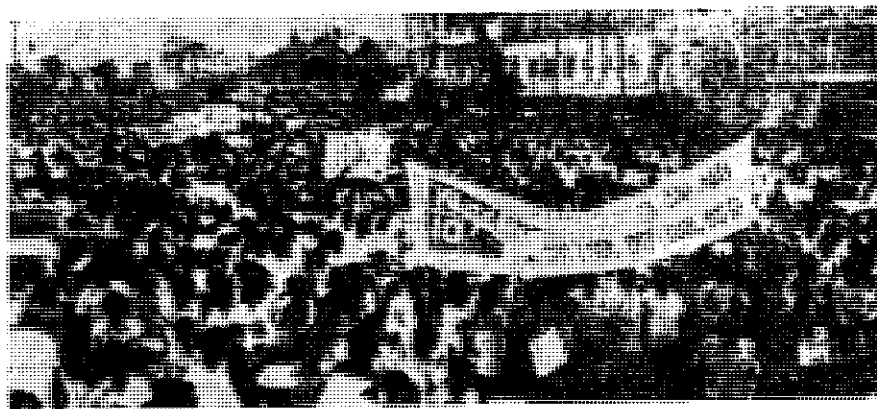
On August 25, 1972, a Saigon daily headed one of its articles; "The North Vietnamese and the Viet Cong stiffen their position—An indirect response to President Nguyen Van Thieu's speech." (It was about the 156th session of the Paris Conference) The daily was seized and handed over to a military tribunal. In the eyes of the officials the sentence "The North Vietnamese and the Viet Cong stiffen their position" constituted a "glorification of the communists" and a violation of Decree-law 007/TT-SLU. The director of the paper was thus liable to a sentence of one to five years' imprisonment and a fine of one to five million piastres and the paper could be closed down.

A few days later, on August 31, 1972 the same paper ran an article supporting the railwaymen in their demands—a very moderate demand, in fact, for wages to be paid at a fixed date. This issue was seized and the director was brought before a military tribunal on a charge of "inciting people to commit acts endangering internal security and public order." According to Articles 28A, 46, 48 and 49 of Law 19-69 as amended by Articles 46, 49 and 50 of Decree-law 007/TT-SLU, the offender became liable to 1 to 3 years' imprisonment and a 1 to 5 million-piastre fine.

With Law 19-69 and Decree-law 007/TT-SLU Thieu has strangled 150 periodicals and is threatening the survival of 12 others.

Over the past months, the Saigon press has launched a movement of struggle against corruption. Seizures and prosecutions have multiplied rapidly. Thus the *Song Than* was seized for having

"Begging" journalists in Saigon (October 10, 1974).



given an "inexact number" of participants in a meeting in Nha Trang for the freedom of the press and against corruption. The *Dien Tin* and *Song Than* were seized for having "dramatized the political and social situation in South Viet Nam," thus "endangering national security." These two papers and another one were brought to trial for having published the "Indictment No. 1" drawn up by certain Catholic priests against Thieu. Within the space of ten days, September 19 to 29, 1974, 19 seizures took place. The *Dien Tin* was seized four times and fined 5 million piastres. On October 31, Mayor of Saigon Do Kien Nhieu ordered

the closing down of the printing house of the paper *Dien Tin* and threatened other publishing houses which might offer to print the paper. Before that, the printing house of the *Dai Dan Toc* paper had also been closed down by order of the government.

The Saigon criminal court sits endlessly from one week to the next trying offenders of the press laws. The director of the *Song Than* himself has been brought before the court 200 times since December 30, 1969, the day when Law 19-69 was promulgated.

A Saigon deputy who is also a

journalist wrote in the *Dien Tin*: "I am an MP, but the papers dare not report my speeches for fear of being seized. I am a journalist, but I cannot write what I believe in my heart, because several of my articles have been seized."

Sometimes journalists have paid with their lives for their revelations of the defects of the regime. Thus, the *International Herald Tribune* of August 28, 1972 told about the murder of the editor of *Dong Phuong* during a meal in a restaurant with members of the editorial board.

## FACTS AND EVENTS

### CAMBODIA: *When Neo-Colonialism Is Laid Bare*

**A**PPLYING the economic measures decreed on September 15, 1974, the Lon Nol puppet administration on September 18, 1974 floated the riel, and immediately its value dropped from 420 to 1,200 riels to the dollar. This was the fourth devaluation and the worst, since March 18, 1970. The devaluation of the riel resulted in a general increase in the prices of various staple goods. The price of petrol went up from 100 to 350 riels per litre, a 250% increase, while rice not only became much more expensive but also very scarce.

Meanwhile, the civil servants' and soldiers' pay was invariably overdue. This led to great indignation.

Starvation spread even to monasteries. Previously, twice a day, the monks were served with free meals by the people. Now, the general impoverishment put an end to the traditional practice and it was only with great difficulty that the monks could procure enough rice to make a light porridge for their bare subsistence. Several of them grew emaciated from malnutrition.

Buddhist schools and institutes were severely affected; many students had to give up their studies. In October 1974, the monks held several teach-ins condemning the reactionary authorities for "destroying religion" and "robbing the poor people of their bread."

Civil servants in many offices refused to attend the "political war" indoctrination courses directed by Pan Sothi, Vice-Premier in charge of education, who had to order their suspension for lack of students.

Starvation in Phnom Penh and other cities caused numerous raids on rice stores staged with the participation of famished soldiers.

On October 20, 1974, while the officers were taking their afternoon nap, sixteen soldiers joined the people in forcing their way into the rice store of the officers' mess in Kbal Thnal, Phnom Penh, and got away with nearly 40 bags of rice. Again, on October 26, 1974, the rice store and rice shops in Boeng Keng Kang market (Phnom Penh) were attacked and a quantity of rice taken.

Another raid on a rice store took place in Kongpong Thom on October 15 and puppet General Ek Proeung, Minister for General Mobilization, Security and Home Affairs, had to come in person to settle the matter. Similar raids were also reported in Kompong Cham, and Battambang.

On October 18, 1974, soldiers of Lon Nol's Battalion 374 in Kompong Speu seized the military commander of the city and demanded payment of their salary and allowance arrears in exchange for his release. To save the colonel, General Chantaraingsey, commander of the Kompong Speu military zone, had to drain his headquarters' funds and beg for money from the American advisors to get the six million riels needed to pay the soldiers.

According to *AKI*, after this incident, the American advisors lost their confidence in the puppet soldiers. They began to keep the money bags themselves and came in person to hand the Lon Nol soldiers their pay. The last veil covering the face of neo-colonialism has now been torn away.



The paper remarked that this unfortunate journalist had specialized in articles about corruption.

Others, like Ngo Dinh Van, Nguyen Thai Lan, Dinh Tu Thuc, Hoang Thoai Chau, have been put into prison for the same reason. The writer Hoang Son was savagely tortured by having nail driven into his anus.

Quite recently, when the journalists were carrying on a fierce resistance against confiscations by burning their publication, they were beaten by the police. Thus the director and manager of the *Dai Dan Toc* were beaten up on September 26, 1974 in front of the editorial office, in the very heart of Saigon. Vo Long Trieu, director of the *Dai Dan Toc*, who is a "deputy to the National Assembly" protested to the Prime Minister in a letter published in his journal: "The government's police were not

content with seizing my paper. They roughed up its personnel (Medical certificate herewith). I myself, a deputy to the National Assembly of the Republic of Viet Nam, was roughly treated in public."

On the night of October 31, Thieu's police rushed into the headquarters of the Journalists' Association in Saigon and manhandled the journalists and deputies present there.

At least two American correspondents had the opportunity to appreciate certain practices of Saigon democracy. One of them, Heywell of the CBS, appeared in a photo reproduced by several Saigon dailies: he was seen collapsing on the ground, his face twisted with pain, his hand on his lower belly, having just been kicked by a Thieu policeman. His crime: having filmed an anti-government demonstration.

### The Press Counter-Offensive

It is the first time that a large-scale counter-offensive has been organized by the Saigon press against the Nguyen Van Thieu administration. The movement started with a decision taken on August 31, 1974 by the paper *Hoa Binh* to "commit suicide," i.e. to suspend its publication, in protest against the seizure of the paper by the Thieu authorities. The director of the *Hoa Binh*, a priest, also held a press conference to demand abolition of Decree-law 007/TT-SLU. By this time the movement against corruption was already mounting rapidly as a result of the publication by Catholic priests of "Indictment No. 1" against Thieu. On September 1, 1974, journalists, writers, deputies and priests met at the Pen Club to protest vigorously against the "grave violations of the free activity of the press." On September 6 a "Committee of Struggle for the Freedom of the Press and Publication" was set up which demanded the "abolition of all restrictions on freedom of the press and publication." Then a "Committee of Struggle against Seizure and Censorship" was created after a "historic" debate (the word is the one used by the Saigon press) in which religious believers and priests, senators and members of opposition groups participated besides representa-

tives of the press. They openly demanded the abolition of Law 19-69 and Decree-law 007/TT-SLU.

In spite of police brutalities, many dailies burnt their publications in public instead of letting them be confiscated.

On October 10, Saigon journalists organized a march from the Journalists' Club to the Central Market with the participation of 5,000 people from all social strata and all branches of activity. Heading the march were 400 journalists dressed as beggars asking for public charity in order to ensure the subsistence of journalists reduced to famine by Thieu.

On October 13, all Saigon papers, except the three controlled by Thieu, suspended publication to protest against the press control system of the Thieu administration.

Starting from October 21, the Saigon dailies decided to boycott the press conferences held by the government and refuse to reproduce news coming from government sources. The journalists and writers unanimously decided to boycott the "Literature and Art Prize of the President of the Republic."

On October 23, three journalists' organizations demanded the dismissal of Hoang Duc Nha,

Thieu's close relative and Minister of Information, who was regarded as the "hangman" of the press.

Reacting against the seizure of papers which had published "Indictment No. 1," the journalists took the initiative in organizing what they called "spoken newspapers," i.e., people going around with loud-speakers publicising the text of the Indictment and other news on the struggle against Thieu.

On November 1, the anniversary of Ngo Dinh Diem's downfall, the journalists once more suspended all publications to mark the "Victimized Press Day."

Upon Thieu's attempt to appease the press movement (by dismissing Hoang Duc Nha and promising to modify the press control system) the journalists, through the Association of Newspaper Directors, met in Saigon on November 9 and announced their firm decision to carry on the struggle till all their demands had been satisfied.

The struggle is not that of the press alone. It is co-ordinated with and supported by their movements, among them the People's Movement Against Corruption, the Forces of National Reconciliation, the People's Movement for the Implementation of the Paris Agreements, etc.

A Saigon MP has described this struggle in an article published in the *Dien Tin*: "The current struggle of the press is aimed not simply at the abrogation of a few laws and decrees, but at the abolition of a whole policy. This is not a struggle of the press alone for the prerogatives of directors and editors of newspapers, but a struggle of the whole people for new conditions in which they can exercise their right to self-determination, with a view to achieving national reconciliation..."

The journalists' movement for their legitimate rights is integrated with the struggle of all social strata of the people in the cities of South Viet Nam for a common end: the overthrow of the Thieu regime, the formation of a government standing for peace, national concord and the strict implementation of the Paris Agreement — that is, an end to US neo-colonialism in South Viet Nam.

The movement of the journalists, like the general movement of the urban population, is irreversible.

MAI HO

# Washington and the Fate...

(Continued from page 11)

In Saigon, political parties were mushrooming, at loggerheads with one another. In mid-1964, 22 parties were active and 12 others had applied for registration. Most of them were tiny groups, loosely organized, with leaders but no members and branch organizations. The bigger ones were torn by dissension. The Dai Viet party alone had split into four sections each following its own political lines. None of these minute parties had any mass base and they were not political forces; even Khanh declared that these parties were simply interested in "defending their personal interests." (24) President Johnson wrote in this connection: "While political confusion dominated the scene in Saigon... I had moments of deep discouragement, times when I felt the South Vietnamese were their own

worst enemies. The South Vietnamese often seemed to have strong impulse towards political suicide. They had great trouble trying to get together to govern themselves." (25)

As they could not rely on the political parties for the implantation of their neo-colonialist policy, the American authorities were anxious to set up in Saigon an organized military dictatorship. In July 1964, Maxwell Taylor succeeded Cabot Lodge as ambassador in Saigon; he gave strong backing to Khanh and the ruling junta who were clamouring for a "March North" as a move to support the US bombing of North Viet Nam. After the "Tonkin Gulf Incident" (August 5, 1964), on August 15, 1964 the commanders of the puppet army approved a constitutional "charter" which stressed the leading role of the army in the management of the State.

## The Young Turks

**A**FTER discarding General Duong Van Minh from the political arena for the last time and superannuating the other generals (Don, Xuan, Kim) who had made the coup to overthrow Ngo Dinh Diem, the younger generals, known as the "Young Turks," including Nguyen Khanh, Nguyen Chanh Thi, Nguyen Van Thieu, Nguyen Cao Ky, Nguyen Huu Co and Tran Thien Khiem, took over the government. Who were they? They too had served in the French army but at lower ranks than the older generals. After 1954 they had been groomed by the Americans and promoted to high ranks. Nguyen Van Thieu is typical: in 1950 he was still an orderly to the French general Vannuxem, a paratroop commander of the French expeditionary corps and a reactionary officer known for his cruelty. A squadron leader in the Air Force in 1954, he was promoted to colonel in 1955 and put in charge of the Dalat military school. After going through a course at the military schools of Leavenworth and Fort Benning in the US, he was given the job of Deputy Chief of Staff and soon named as commander of one of the army corps.

In the eyes of the Americans, the "Young Turks" were not so pro-French as the older officers; they were professional soldiers who could be used to build a new US-controlled regime and, better still, would willingly accept the introduction of GIs into South Viet Nam. Adventurers and opportunists, they had grown rich with the war and regarded warfare as their *raison d'être*. They thus became the most faithful servants of the Americans, devoted heart and soul to the US war of aggression. As in Latin America, Turkey, Greece, South Korea, Indonesia, Thailand, in South Viet Nam only the revolutionary organizations are strongly organized and have deep roots among the masses, thus there is nothing but the puppet army with tight organization and discipline that can serve as a prop for the reactionaries. The CIA agent Edward Lansdale, who had played a decisive role in setting up the Diem regime, recognized that, as the only organization [in South Viet Nam] with a communications system covering the whole country, since the telecommunications network had not been damaged in the war, the [puppet] army was in a position to send orders

to all units in the country and take disciplinary measures, which was something civilian authorities could not do (26). That is why, as early as the days of the Diem administration, the prime concern of the Americans was to lay hands on the puppet army and to turn it into a dependable counter-revolutionary instrument. When the militarist dictatorship had been rigged up, the remaining question was to find among the "Young Turks" the man best able to head that war machine.

Khanh was an excessively ambitious man. At one time he held four important posts in the administration and army and he had many enemies on account of his offensive barrack-room manners. Capitalizing on a misuse of his authority, Maxwell Taylor forced him to resign (27).

On June 14, 1965, the young generals set up the National Leadership Council and formed a "war cabinet" with Nguyen Van Thieu as Head of State, Nguyen Cao Ky as Prime Minister and Nguyen Huu Co as Defence Minister. This occurred at a time when the special war had failed and many US ground combat units had been sent in and put in defensive position around Da Nang and north of Saigon. Thieu and Ky decreed a state of war in the whole country, forbade meetings and demonstrations and closed down many newspapers. They threatened to kill tens of thousands of people if necessary to keep order and had a sandbagged execution ground erected in Saigon to deal with those who stood against the regime. To legalize the presence of GIs already brought to South Viet Nam, one of their first tasks was to make an official request to the White House for the dispatch of large numbers of GIs and satellite troops to South Viet Nam (28).

The introduction of GIs into the country and the fascist measures taken by Thieu and Ky could not improve their situation on the battlefield. On the contrary, the Saigon regime had to cope with a new political crisis with the uprising, in autumn 1965, of the people in the Central Highlands who demanded an autonomous state and the secessionist movement in Hue and the provinces of Central Trung Bo in the summer of 1966. These provinces were under the control of the First Army Corps whose commander, Nguyen Chanh Thi, the

VIET NAM COURIER

government representative in this region, wanted to make use of the anti-Thieu-Ky movement there to force the Americans to discard them and bring him to power. However, with the agreement of the US Embassy in Saigon, Thieu and Ky dismissed Thi. Thi then prodded the leaders of the student and Buddhist movement, including some officials of the puppet administration, to launch an uprising against Thieu and Ky and declare secession from the central administration in Saigon. Remarkably enough, many units of the army corps and the divisions stationed there sided with the movement, which was strengthened by the combined action of many organizations in Saigon and other provinces, especially from the Buddhist and students. These were days of great danger for the militarist regime. Nevertheless Thieu and Ky managed to send marines to Da Nang and Hue to quell the Buddhist and student movement and put down the resistance of the dissident troops. How were they able to stay in

power? The main reason was that they were strongly supported by Washington as the tools who would implement the US plan of war. At the Honolulu conference, held on February 7, 1966, President Johnson declared that he gave total support to Thieu and Ky (29). Furthermore he used US military force to strengthen the regime of the Saigon junta. In fact, the presence of two hundred thousand GIs and satellite troops in South Viet Nam at that time was discouragement for any puppet generals who might desire to engineer a coup d'état in Saigon. It was the US Embassy which had given orders to Thieu and Ky to send combat troops to Da Nang to crack down on the opposition forces (30) and the US Command had supplied them with helicopters for the transport of marines to fight the dissident units. But whereas the street demonstrations, hunger-strikes and self-immolations in 1963 against Diem had yielded results, this time conditions had changed and the opposition movement did not succeed.

of 400,000 GIs and after two strategic offensives in the dry seasons of 1965-1966 and 1966-1967, the situation in the war front had not improved in favour of the US. Washington wanted to avoid at all costs any break-down in the puppet war machine. Implementing Johnson's policy, Ambassador Bunker made it clear that Thieu and Ky should stand for election on the same ticket with Thieu as the principal candidate (32). Then, in a stormy debate among the ruling junta, Ky was forced to put aside his personal ambitions and accepted this on condition that he could appoint the Prime Minister (Nguyen Van Loc). Meanwhile Washington, continuing a method dear to it, used Ky to keep a check on Thieu.

### Thieu or Ky?

THERE were many contradictions among the generals as a result of the struggle for power going on within the ranks of the Young Turks. Purges were frequent. In May 1965, the Army Council pensioned off nine generals and dismissed seventy high-ranking officers. In August 1965, other generals, including Khanh, who did not see eye to eye with the ruling junta were discarded. In the summer of 1966, after the secession movement in Central Trung Bo, Nguyen Chanh Thi and Ton That Dinh were discharged. The power was in the hands of Thieu, Ky and Co, the latter being Minister of National Defence. However, as Co, working hand in glove with some army corps commanders, was scheming to overthrow Thieu and Ky, he was fired by the latter on the ground of corruption.

With regard to civilians in the opposition, on the orders of the US, Thieu and Ky rigged up "political congresses" (April 1966), military-civilian councils and organized fraudulent elections to a "Constituent Assembly" (September 11, 1966) to make a

show of democracy. A "constitution" was drafted and hastily adopted by the Assembly in one night. After overcoming the opposition of some "deputies" by resorting to such acts as murdering the most active members of the opposition such as Tran Van Van (January 1967), Thieu and Ky prepared for the presidential elections scheduled for September 1967. But both of them wanted to head the puppet administration. A bitter quarrel broke out which jeopardized the existence of the new military regime and caused great misgivings in Washington. According to L.B. Johnson: "If rivalry broke out between the two leaders, no one could forecast what might happen. A split in the military forces caused by conflicting loyalties to the two men could have disastrous consequences." (31)

At the Guam conference President Johnson reiterated his choice of personnel and made it clear that he would not forgive any scramble for power which was likely to impede the US war efforts. In fact, with the presence

Why did the US opt for Thieu? Ky, though zealous, was a cynical playboy, a typical hooligan in the eyes of the public, whereas Washington wanted the Saigon regime to show a clean face, to have a more presentable Head of State. Thieu was clever and cunning, he showed more moderation in the quarrel within the ruling circle and finally came out victorious. Moreover, born in South Viet Nam, he could put up a "native" face which was to the liking of the Americans, who wanted to give the Saigon regime a facade of independence and freedom.

When the issue of the presidential elections in September 1967 had been decided at Guam, any other candidates such as Au Truong Thanh and Truong Dinh Dzu could be arrested and jailed at any time, and Nguyen Van Thieu was now the most loyal man in Washington's eyes (33).

The general offensive launched by the liberation armed forces at Tet 1968 was a severe blow to the Thieu regime. The Pentagon hurriedly sent in reinforcements and compelled Thieu to decree a general mobilization.

In March 1968, when the NFL offensive was in full swing in Saigon, Ky and his men were meeting at Cholon to prepare a coup against Thieu. Suddenly an American helicopter fired a rocket at the meeting place, causing many casualties among Ky's men.

The coup was nipped in the bud (34). Thieu then thinned out Ky's supporters in the government and replaced puppet Premier Nguyen Van Loc by Tran Van Huong. But by this time, the US had already scented defeat in Viet Nam. Johnson's advisers had realized that "the policy was a failure and must be changed." (35). Washington tried to pull out its troops and to "Vietnamize the war."

To implant its neo-colonialist policy in South Viet Nam, Nixon, who succeeded Johnson as President of the United States, has waged the bloodiest war ever known in history. He has been using the most up-to-date technique and the maximum fire power in order to annihilate the material and human resources of the patriotic forces, suppress all sign of life in the liberated areas and check the assistances coming from the North in order to make the resistance of the PRG impossible. The puppet administration and army were strengthened and the control of the Saigon-held areas tightened, chiefly by successive bloody "pacification" operations. The leading role was now played by the puppet army which had been modernized by the Pentagon and enlarged to 1.1 million men in the regular forces, 3.5 million "bao an" and "dan ve" of the people's self-defence units and 120,000 policemen. The regular forces were stationed in 8,000 posts built all over the country. The police was present everywhere even down to the hamlet level. The administrative apparatus was militarized and, in successive putsches, Thieu planted his men at all levels. Government representatives in the tactical areas and the highest authorities at province and district levels were army officers, who assumed command of both administrative and military organizations. Since the end of 1972, the army officers have also taken charge of the rural police and the administration of villages,

hamlets and town-quarters; the administrative and police machine has been streamlined from the central level to the grassroots.

With such an apparatus, Nguyen Van Thieu helped the Americans to execute their strategic plans and to repress the political struggle of the towns-

people. Many leaders in the Buddhist and student movement, members of the opposition and even those who had formerly closely collaborated with Thieu, have been molested. This situation has enabled the US to gradually repatriate the GIs while maintaining neo-colonialism in South Viet Nam.

### Does Thieu Remain an Efficient Tool?

**E**ARLY in 1972, the liberation armed forces attacked simultaneously on several fronts. The plan to pacify the Mekong Delta and the coastal plains in Central Viet Nam, together with the Thieu regime and Nixon's plan of Vietnamization of the war were in jeopardy. Nixon was compelled to bring in the Seventh Fleet and the Strategic Air Force in Southeast Asia to save Thieu, to re-Americanize the war, and bomb the DRVN for the second time. On his part, Nguyen Van Thieu availed himself of this opportunity to force the "National Assembly" to give him special powers which would consolidate his position. Under the pretext of "ensuring national security" he signed about sixty decrees forbidding street demonstrations and meetings, strangling freedom of the press and checking the activities of political parties. His aim was to neutralize all opposition, especially to suppress the third political force which was developing in opposition to his regime. Thieu concentrated more and more powers in his own hands and trusted only his close protégés and relatives such as Hoang Duc Nha, Ngo Khac Tinh, Dang Van Quang.

Nixon delayed signing the Paris Agreement as long as possible so as to enable him to send rapid reinforcements to Thieu and cause the maximum bombing damage on North Viet Nam. From October 1972 until January 1973 a

vast airlift poured billions of dollars of armaments into South Viet Nam. It was then that Thieu declared his "four noes" (no collaboration with the PRG, no acceptance of neutrality, no national reconciliation, and no partitioning of South Viet Nam, i.e. non-recognition of the areas liberated by the resistance forces).

No sooner had the Paris Agreement been initialled than Nixon reiterated, on January 23, 1973, that the Thieu regime was "the sole legitimate government of South Viet Nam." This is a clear expression of the attitude of the United States and the Saigon regime toward the Agreement signed on January 27, 1973. The failure of "Vietnamization" had forced Nixon to sign this document and recognize the existence of the PRG, the PLAF and the liberated areas, but he intended to continue the "Vietnamized" war. Washington's military and strategic position was weakened but it still possessed a huge quantity of war materials. Thus Nixon still nursed the hope that, with a few billion dollars of military and economic aid to the Saigon regime every year, with the maintenance of some thousands of military advisers disguised as civilians and a deterrent force in Southeast Asia and with a docile puppet administration, he could still keep Saigon in the US orbit. That is why Thieu has systematically sabotaged the Paris Agreement, and kept South

Viet Nam in a state of war. "Everything remains as it was before. Nothing has changed," he declared (36). Thieu's armed forces are kept at a level of 1.1 million, and the police force of over 200,000 is one of the largest in any country in the "free world"; he maintains all the anti-democratic laws, fills the prisons to capacity and prevents the "refugees" from returning to their villages. His regime is a product of the US aggressive war and will last as long as Washington persists in its warlike policies. In twenty months after the signing of the Paris Agreement, the US has paid a high price for the continuation of the Viet Nam war. The encroachment upon the liber-

ated areas has been dealt heavy blows by an opponent who has grown much stronger than it was before. Since last autumn, the Saigon army has had to fall back on the defensive. The "pacification" operations have been countered in the Mekong Delta and other regions and hundreds of thousands of peasants who found it impossible to live in the concentration areas have returned to their native lands. The political, economic and social situation is gloomy in the Saigon-controlled zone and the disaffection with the regime is daily growing. President Ford wishes to follow in Nixon's footsteps but the continuation of US involvement in

Viet Nam has angered the American people and Congress. The whole basis of Thieu's is crumbling, and even the Catholic Church keeps its distance. In Saigon an almost unanimous movement is demanding the overthrow of Thieu and the setting up of a government ready to strictly implement the Paris Agreement. More than ever before, Thieu's fate depends on what the Americans decide: either to continue the present policy or to amend or change it.

November 1974

TA XUAN LINH

(1) M. Taylor, *Swords and Plowshares*, Norton and Co., New York, 1972, p. 229.

(2) The Pentagon Papers, *Bantam Books*, New York, 1971, Cablegram sent by E. Durbrow to C.A. Herter, Secretary of State, Sept. 16, 1960, p.118.

(3) The Pentagon Papers Memorandum, p.125.

(4) M. Taylor, *op. cit.* p.233.

(5) The Pentagon Papers, M. Taylor's Report to President Kennedy on Nov. 3, 1961, p.147.

(6) M. Taylor, *op. cit.* p.220.

(7) *Ibid.* p.227.

(8) *Ibid.*, p.220.

(9) H.C. Lodge, *The Storm Has Many Eyes*, Norton Co. 1973, p.210.

(10) *Ibid.*, p.210.

(11) The Pentagon Papers State Department Study in Late 1962 on Prospects in South Viet Nam, p.155.

(12) The Pentagon Papers, Johnson's order, p.233 and Joint Chiefs of Staff's Memo, p.276.

(13) *Ibid.*, McNamara's Report to Johnson, p.272.

(14) Duncanson, *Government and Revolution*, Oxford University Press, 1968, p.346.

(15) The Pentagon Paper, Memo from McNamara to Johnson p.271.

(16) *Ibid.*, p.271.

(17) *Ibid.*, Taylor's report, p.293.

(18) *Ibid.*, McNamara's report, p.282.

(19) *Ibid.*, p.310.

(20) M. Taylor, *op. cit.*, p.311.

(21) The Pentagon Papers, p.280.

(22) M. Taylor, *op. cit.*, p.309.

(23) L.B. Johnson, *The Vantage Point*, Weidenfeld and Nicholson, London, 1972, p.122.

(24) Saigon Radio, July 1, 1964 broadcast.

(25) L.B. Johnson, *op. cit.*, pp.64-65.

(26) E. Lansdale, *In the Midst of Wars*, Harper and Row, 1972, (translated from the Vietnamese text printed by the Literary Publishing House in Saigon, 1972, p.122.)

(27) "I told Khanh that frankly I had lost confidence in him as such an ally. While his continuation in office as Commander in Chief was an internal Vietnamese decision, I

gave him my personal view that his withdrawal from the public scene would be good for the common cause," M. Taylor *op. cit.*, p.331.

(28) "Ky went straight to his principal point, the need for additional US ground combat forces," L.B. Johnson, *The Vantage Point*, p.143.

(29) "As a result of the Honolulu Conference the government of Vietnam under Thieu and Ky was pledged to an all-out effort to win 'the other war' in their country. We were equally pledged to help them in that struggle," L.B. Johnson, *op. cit.*

(30) *Washington Star*, May 20, 1966.

(31) L.B. Johnson, *op. cit.*, 262.

(32) J.C. Pomenti, *La Rage d'être vietnamien*, Seuil Publishing House, Paris, 1974, p.94.

(33) J.C. Pomenti, *op. cit.*, p.87: "Diem is a Vietnamese problem. Thieu is a US-protected thing; he is a Vietnamese problem."

(34) Quan Doi Nhan Dan June 29 and 30, 1974, "In the Presidential Palace" by Thanh Van.

(35) M. Taylor, *op. cit.*, p.390.

(36) Televised speech of January 28, 1973.

# The Battles of Hanoi

All through its history, Hanoi, whose liberation from the French colonialists 20 years ago (October 10, 1954) has just been commemorated, has had to cope with the powerful military forces of foreign countries. In the 13th century, three large-scale invasions by the Yuan were smashed, mainly in the environs of Thang Long. In the spring of 1789, with the historic victory at Dong Da on the outskirts of Hanoi, the Tay Son forces inflicted heavy defeat on 200,000 Tsing troops.

At the end of the 19th century, Hanoi, like the rest of Viet Nam, fell into the hands of the French colonialists, and remained under their rule until the Revolution of August 1945 and the subsequent founding of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam. Afterwards, Hanoi participated in the national resistance against the French and the Americans.

## 1873 - 1882: THE FALL OF HANOI

IN 1802, the opening year of the Nguyen dynasty, Thang Long lost its position as the capital of feudal Viet Nam. The capital was transferred to Hue, in Central Viet Nam, and in 1831 the name Thang Long was also changed to Hanoi.

The French colonialists, who by 1870 had got a foothold in Cochinchina (now South Viet Nam), tried to penetrate into Southwest China by the Red River.

"The opening of this route brings more than 50 million people into direct contact with European civilization, creates a new and immense outlet for our products and establishes, in the proximity of Saigon, an easy and not very expensive communica-

tion with the wealthiest countries in the world hitherto entirely cut off from foreign trade." (1)

In 1872 a convoy led by the French merchant Jean Dupuis without any authorization from the Court of Hue sailed up the Red River to Yunnan to sell guns and munitions. After selling all his merchandise, Dupuis returned to Hanoi with enormous demands: a concession within Hanoi itself, freedom of movement along the Red River, freedom to buy Vietnamese salt and coal to be sold in Yunnan, and so on.

Embarrassed and frightened at the French merchant's arrogant attitude, the Court of Hue turned to the French officials in Saigon for help. This offered a golden pretext for the French to carry

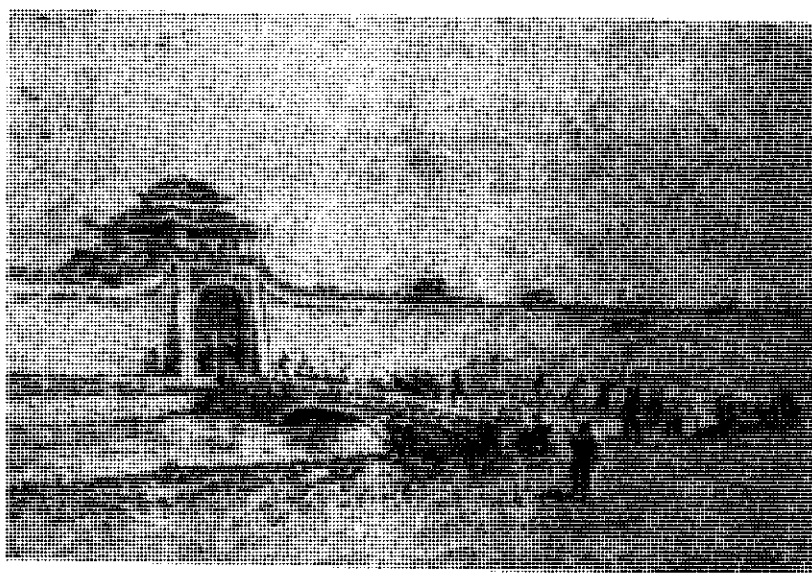
out their first military intervention in Tonkin.

On November 3, 1873, a French flotilla with about 200 troops on board, under the command of Captain Francis Garnier, anchored at Hanoi harbour. Outwardly, he declared that his task was to settle the "dispute between Dupuis and the Court of Hue", but in fact, he got into contact with the forces of Dupuis and with the French Catholic missionaries in Hanoi, among them Puginier. When his absurd demands — freedom of movement, abolition of customs duties levied by the Vietnamese Court, and land for garrisoning their troops — were turned down by the Court of Hue, Francis Garnier sent an ultimatum to Nguyen Tri Phuong who was in command of the forces defending the Hanoi citadel. Even before the deadline of the ultimatum had expired, Garnier ordered his troops to open fire and, on November 20, 1873, the first shells fell into the citadel of Hanoi.

Generally speaking, the resistance of the troops of the Court of Hue against this first attack by the French was weak. The policy of capitulation and conciliation applied 15 years ago in Cochinchina was now repeated in Tonkin. "Stay Quiet" was the advice given by King Tu Duc to his mandarins when he heard of the French attack.

Nguyen Tri Phuong was seriously wounded by a shell in the very first battle. After taking the citadel, the French offered him medical treatment but he refused all care and chose to die from starvation. "It is better to die peacefully thus, than to live in indignity," he told his men.

In sharp contrast to the attitude of the royal Court, the people of



The French colonialist troops attacking the Southeastern gate of Hanoi Citadel (November 20, 1873)

Hanoi and of Tonkin as a whole had promptly risen up to resist the French. The latter found no great difficulty in occupying a number of provinces around Hanoi such as Ninh Binh, Nam Dinh and Hai Duong but they found it impossible to establish any contacts with the population who refused to sell them rice and food-stuffs. Small ambushes were repeatedly occurring.

Under the command of Liu Yung-fu (2), the Chinese "Hei Ki" (Black Flag) army moved from Lao Cai (the northwestern-most province of Viet Nam) to Hanoi to challenge the French. The ensuing battle at Cau Giay, a southwestern suburb of Hanoi, was a bitter defeat for the French with Francis Garnier among the dead (December 21, 1873).

This event struck fear among the French army, as described by Jean Dupuis:

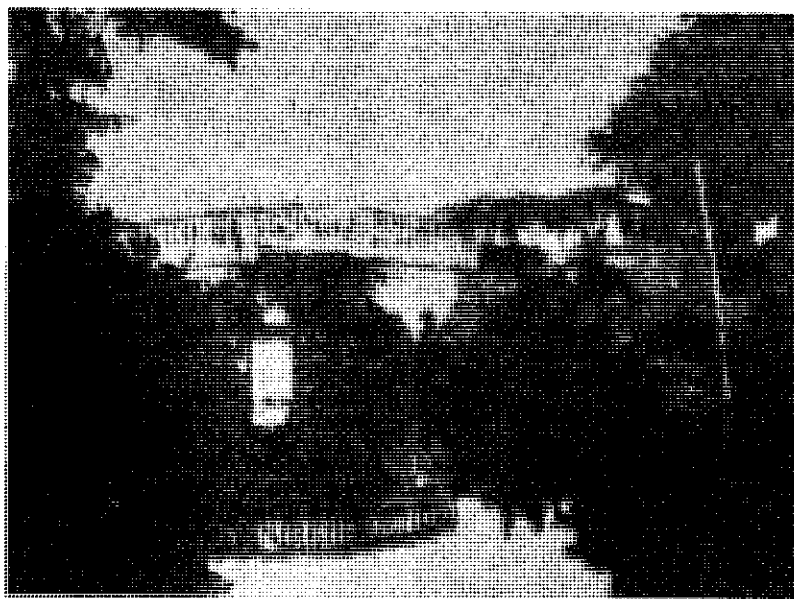
"Panic is great in the citadel, chiefly among the French. There are no more than forty able-bodied men and, moreover, several of them are exhausted. Apart from the deaths there are seven or eight wounded. Mr Bain is deeply shocked and under the influence of the general emotion has decided to abandon the citadel and withdraw to the ships." (3)

Unfortunately, the Court of Hue let the opportunity slip, failing to organize any counter-attack.

The Court's line had all along been to negotiate, to beg for peace in order to deal with uprisings in the country. It even did its best to undermine the efforts of the anti-French resistance forces.

Following the death of Francis Garnier, the complete annihilation of the remnants of French troops seemed to be only a matter of time. The French themselves confessed this. Still, King Tu Duc chose to sign a peace treaty in 1874. Under this pact, the French were allowed to station troops in Hanoi and Haiphong, and the Red River was opened to French merchants. Hanoi itself, however, remained under the authority of the Court of Hue.

Drawing experience from the first fall of Hanoi, Hoang Dieu, the new governor of the capital, did not wait for any order from the royal Court but concentrated on strengthening the city's fortifications. In a report to the King, he asserted: "How can we trust the enemy, after these 10 years' application of the peace treaty?"



*Cau Giay—the place where Francis Garnier was killed in an ambush on December 21, 1873*

"That was why," he wrote, "since I arrived here three years ago, I have constantly trained my men and officers, ordered the repair of our fortresses, for the purpose not only of consolidating our territory, but also stopping the wolves and jackals coming from the outside.

"... To my mind, Hanoi is the throat of the North, a key position. If it falls, the other places will follow suit. And so, I have sent directives to the surrounding areas and reported what I am doing to the Court, asking for more troops in order to oppose the enemy effectively. I have been surprised to receive some edicts which either blamed me for taking advantage of my military power to intimidate my men, or condemned me for handling the situation inappropriately." (4)

In violation of the 1874 Peace Treaty, the French again sent troops to Tonkin in 1882, this time under the command of Henri Rivière who sent an ultimatum to Hoang Dieu, demanding the dismantling of all fortifications. The ultimatum was rejected, and the French attacked.

Although he was suffering from an illness, Hoang Dieu climbed onto the top wall of the citadel to lead the fight against the enemy. The governor's bravery stimulated men and officers to fight still harder.

The battle had raged from 8

a.m. until 11 a.m. when suddenly the ammunition dump inside the citadel exploded, as a result of treason. As confusion was spreading on the Vietnamese side, the French concentrated their attacks on the Northern and Western Gates of Hanoi. Meanwhile, outside the citadel, Hanoi people had set fire to every street block in an effort to halt the French advance. Armed with rudimentary weapons, they went in groups to all the gates of the citadel, and asked for permission to join in fighting the enemy. At the same time, the people in all the houses beat drums and gongs and toccins, in order to stimulate the defenders.

About 1,000 other people, armed with spears, knives and sticks gathered in front of the Quang Van communal house (now the "Cua Nam" — Southern Gate — market-place) and, under the command of an old scholar named Dong, they streamed into the citadel and asked permission to join in the fighting.

But fire was spreading rapidly from the gunpowder dump. The Vietnamese troops were in disarray. Hoang Dieu himself committed suicide. Once again, Hanoi had fallen to the French.

Nonetheless, the popular forces who continued to encircle Hanoi managed to kill Henri Rivière in an ambush at the very place where Francis Garnier had fallen.

In his article "The Commander's Death" published in



*L'Avenir du Tonkin*, Sept. 29, 1888, a contemporary Frenchman, L. Yaun, described the terrible fear of the French soldiers who had narrowly escaped death at Cau

Giay, "expecting to meet their end" if the Vietnamese had continued their attacks. Once again, however, the Court of Hue missed the opportunity to organize a counter-attack.

#### 1946 - 1947: FIGHTING STREET BY STREET FOR TWO MONTHS

**A**FTER capturing Hanoi (1882), the French set up their administrative machine without waiting for the Court of Hue to recognize France's "protectorate." In June 1883, Bonnal, the first French "Resident," was sent to Hanoi. But the population refused to collaborate. In his memoirs *Au Tonkin* Bonnal complained that the city had been completely deserted by its population and it was very dangerous for any Frenchman to venture into its streets. Bonnal's own authority existed only on paper.

The Hanoi people many times rose up to oppose the French administration. *Dong Kinh Nghia Thuc* (School of the Just Cause) (5) (1907), the "Poisoning Affair in Hanoi" (1908) (6), as well as the bomb attacks on the *Coq d'Or* Hotel (1913) (7), all helped to arouse public opinion.

From 1925 onward, many workers' strikes took place in Hanoi. The proletarian revolutionary movement took shape and became most highly developed in Hanoi. *Thanh Nien Cach Mang Dong Chi Hoi* (The League of the Young Revolutionaries) — forerunner of the Indochinese Communist Party — was founded in Hanoi in 1928.

In March 1929, at 5 D Ham Long Street, the first communist cell was set up. The Vietnamese national democratic revolution entered a new stage with the founding of the Indochinese Communist Party in 1930. During the period 1930-1945, the revolutionary movement continued to gain momentum, culminating in the General Insurrection which seized power on August 19, 1945.

The Democratic Republic of Viet Nam was established with the Declaration of Independence read out by President Ho Chi Minh in Ba Dinh Square on September 2, 1945. This historic document was written by President Ho Chi Minh on a small table in a modest house at 48 Hang Ngang (Transversal) Street, one of the busiest commercial streets of Hanoi.

The Provisional Agreement of March 6, 1946 between the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam and France was sabotaged by the colonialists. The French troops stationed in Hanoi made repeated provocations. By December 1946, the situation had become extremely strained: French soldiers fired on Vietnamese troops guarding public offices, occupied the former Direction of Finances (now the site of the Foreign Ministry) and demanded the demolition of fortifications in Hanoi. In Hang Bun (Rice oodleN), Street a hundred defenceless people, mostly women and children, were mown down by French machine-gun fire.

On the night of December 19, 1946, artillery fire began to boom around Hanoi. The electric power was cut off, plunging the whole city into darkness. Self-defence units felled trees and pulled down lamp posts, while the people in every quarter and street voluntarily brought their own tables, chairs, trunks, cupboards and other furniture into the streets to erect barricades. In Hang Bong (Cotton) Street and Hang Gai (Hemp) Street merchants pushed the goods they were selling onto the streets: whole bales of fabric, raw cotton, hemp, etc., and in Bat Su (Porcelaine Bowl) Street barricades were made with trunkloads of precious chinaware. Meanwhile, a number of Vietnamese combat units fanned out to destroy nests of reactionaries which the French had planted beforehand in many street blocks. Within hours, many such nests had been wiped out.

"As we desire peace, we have made concessions. But, the more concessions we make, the more the French colonialists press on, for they are bent on reconquering our country.

"No! We would rather sacrifice all than lose our country. Never shall we be enslaved!" (8)

Prior to the outbreak of hostilities, the French had at their disposal 6,500 crack legionaries,

62 tanks and armoured vehicles, 19 fighter and bomber aircraft including Potez and Spitfires, 42 artillery pieces, 5,000 rifles, 600 light machine-guns, and 180 heavy guns. The Vietnamese had just built a unified armed force, the *Ve Quoc Doan* (National Guard), consisting of five battalions with a total of 2,515 men, armed with only 1,500 rifles half of which were flintlocks and shotguns, four light machine-guns, seven 75 mm anti-aircraft guns which had been modified to serve as ground artillery, one 75 mm mountain cannon (positioned at Lang village), 80 tripod anti-tank bombs (a type of bomb devised by Vietnamese engineering troops, with a three-metre long handle and a tripod to support the bomb; a man firmly holding the handle could dash onto an enemy tank to destroy it). For munitions, we had only 20,000 bullets and about 1,000 hand grenades.

In view of our feeble armament, the French Command at first estimated that it would not take more than 24 hours to seize complete control of Hanoi and capture the leaders of our government.

On the night of December 19, 1946, 300 legionaries, 8 tanks, ten armed half-tracks and two howitzers assaulted the *Bac Bo Phu* (North Viet Nam Governor's Palace), which is now the Government Guest House, just opposite the *Thong Nhat* (Reunification) Hotel, where they hoped to find some of our top leaders.

The Palace was then defended by a single company of the National Guard, reinforced by 20 workers from the nearby Central Post Office. The battle lasted all the night of December 19 and until the evening of the following day, with the defenders fighting for each iron railing and each window. In the end, the French took the empty palace, at the cost of 150 men killed or wounded and 4 tanks destroyed. The Vietnamese took 45 casualties, but the rest withdrew in safety.

The *Bac Bo Phu* battle was a bad omen for the French "blitzkrieg" tactics.

From then on, in each street, each quarter, each gate of the city, Vietnamese troops, in close co-ordination with different strata of the Hanoi population, held the initiative, intercepting all enemy troops and tying them down. The French wanted to break through the various gates



of the capital in order to attack and seize the neighbouring provinces, but to no avail.

Toward the end of December 1946, the Vietnamese concentrated their forces and the French followed suit with the aim of destroying them. The result was the creation of one of the fiercest and also one of the most heroic battlefronts of Hanoi — that of the First Section — waged in an ancient and very populous quarter in the heart of Hanoi. Besides the combat forces, more than 40,000 civilians still remained there. In this section, the *Trung Doan Thu Do* (Regiment of the Capital) was founded and carried on the fight for two months, under very hard conditions, running short even of drinking water as most of the wells inside the section had been either destroyed or poisoned by the enemy. Up to 100 Hanoians in their teens came forward to serve as messengers and 200 women acted as first-aid nurses and cooks.

On the night of February 17, 1947, according to plan, the "Regiment of the Capital" safely withdrew from central Hanoi, to the complete surprise of the French. Its task — to pin down the enemy in Hanoi so that the resistance might organize its forces in the countryside — had been fulfilled. The French had counted on a blitzkrieg, but they now faced a long and costly war.

During the two months of fighting in the heart of Hanoi, one image stood out — that of the death volunteers who dashed against enemy tanks with "tripod bombs" in their hands. In contrast, the French had to shackle their tank drivers' legs to their seats as was later admitted by a captured French soldier. A report from *AFP* described "how easily French troops died, anywhere, and at any moment in the streets of Hanoi."

During the fighting, tens of thousands of people had been led by cadres and combatants out of Hanoi to safer areas, after dodging enemy fire and slipping past many enemy positions. Many sacrificed their lives heroically to ensure the safety of the evacuees.

At *Tet* of that year — the Year Dinh Hoi (of the Pig) — following a national custom, the "Regiment of the Capital" did not forget to organize "Tet cele-

bration" for all the combatants and other people in the First Section. A grand banquet was arranged in a private house at Hang Chieu (Mat) Street, with immaculate table cloths and the traditional *banh chung* (glu-

tionous rice cakes), to which the US, British and Chinese consuls were invited. This fact alone proved the emptiness of the French propaganda claim that the Vietnamese forces were in a "tight spot."

## 1972: DESTRUCTION OF A MYTH

**S**EVEN years later, on October 10, 1954, the "Regiment of the Capital" returned to Hanoi and liberated it from the French. But soon the US imperialists, who had stepped into the shoes of the French colonialists in South Viet Nam, launched an air war of destruction against North Viet Nam.

Hanoi itself was bombed for the first time in mid-1966. It promptly geared itself to fight at the same time as carrying on production.

In 1972, the Americans used B.52s, F.111s and other ultra-sophisticated jet aircraft to launch massive strikes against Hanoi, Haiphong and other heavily populated areas, in an attempt to turn the tide.

The US air blitz was triggered on the night of December 18, 1972, hours only after Le Duc Tho's return from Paris. But that very night, on a paddy field on the fringe of Hanoi, a B.52 painted black, with "SAC" (Strategic Air Command) markings, crashed after being hit by our A.A. fire. At a press conference on December 21, 1972, Vietnamese and foreign journalists were able to see the wreckage of the downed B.52 and meet its captured crew. The huge planes proved to be no invulnerable fortresses or decisive weapons as US propaganda had boasted.

Hanoians, like the rest of the Vietnamese people, have not been intimidated by B.52s. These sophisticated planes were energetically countered by the Vietnamese anti-aircraft and air force combatants, while most of the civilian population left the city in a well organized evacuation to the countryside and mountain areas. In these evacuation places everybody continued to work and children continued to go to school. Those who remained in Hanoi were assigned the tasks of fighting and producing, or serving fighting and production. This was the secret of why, after the 12

days of massive B.52 bombing of Hanoi, which included the savage carpet-bombing of Kham Thien and An Duong residential quarters and Bach Mai Hospital, the only panic to be seen was that of the American pilots. One of these admitted:

"Yes, sir, I sensed disheartenment, even irritation at the bombing orders. No, sir, never before had there been such a wretched atmosphere at the B.52 base." (9)

Air Force Hero Pham Tuan, the young Vietnamese fighter pilot, who had then flown less than 1,000 hours (as against the thousands flown by most of B.52 pilots), brought down a B.52 in an air battle on December 27, 1972.

The self-defence unit of Factory X., lying on the bank of the Red River, shot down an F.111, the latest creation of the US aeronautics industry with the first volley of a 12.7mm machine-gun. This swing-wing aircraft fell, almost intact, near Hanoi, with the meters in the cockpit still working.

In all 34 B.52s had been shot down in North Viet Nam, 23 of them over Hanoi. But the most bitter thing for the US was that: Washington had to halt the bombing throughout the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam and, on January 27, 1973, was forced to sign the Paris Agreement on Ending the War and Restoring Peace in Viet Nam with

(Continued on page 30)



# US Aid

## *to the Saigon Administration*

(Concluded)

### ECONOMIC AID

As was said before, all USAID programs for the purpose of military "support" come under the category of "economic aid," and most of them are characterized as "project programs." This type of aid is channelled through USAID; the US supplies foreign currency (US dollars) for Saigon to import US goods or to be drawn from a "counterpart account fund" at the Saigon administration's National Bank and used for financing projects, paying services or granting scholarships to South Vietnamese students in the US or US satellite countries. Project programs are aimed at "supporting" police activities, "pacification" operations, logistics, and the Saigon administration's military and political activities in various localities, thus reducing Saigon's expenditure and needs of foreign currency. All goods imported under "project programs" are directly used in projects already approved by the US, they do not bring any indirect income for the budget, as their resale on the home market is forbidden and they are not subjected to import taxes.

From 1965 to 1972, US "project aid programs" in South Viet Nam cost about 200 million dollars a year on the average. In 1967, they were increased to 255 million dollars, but in 1973, they were reduced to 86.1 million dollars. In 1974, they may be

increased, because as American journalists have revealed, the US wants to help Thieu build an arms and ammunition industry in South Viet Nam.

Among the "project aid programs," the following are worth noticing:

1. *Public Safety Program*, started in 1955, under the responsibility of USAID.

From 1955 to 1961, it was mainly used for the training and building up of the Saigon police forces. This job was at first assumed by MSUG, then by the Public Safety Division within USOM, and finally by USAID. Under this program, the US supplied 200 advisers and 7,000 specialists in police work for the training, organization and equipment of the Saigon "national police forces" from the central to the local level including the National Police Field Forces (NPF) specializing in the launching of "pacification" operations to destroy the Viet Cong infrastructure.

Over the past ten years and more, the Public Safety Program has been entrusted with three main tasks:

a) To rebuild the Saigon "national police forces";

b) To build a modern system of communications for the Saigon police from the central level to the villages; and

c) To enlarge the existing prisons in South Viet Nam and build new ones.

In order to carry out the first task, from 1967 to 1972 alone, USAID gave Saigon 77.8 million dollars and the Defense Department furnished 48 million in direct aid for the building of the NPF (17). According to the Japanese paper *Mainichi Shimbun* of April 17, 1974, the US has spent 131,700,000 dollars since 1967, in building up and equipping the Saigon police forces (18).

To carry out the third task, during the same period 1967-1972, USAID and the Defense Department allotted 3,438,000 dollars to Saigon. In 1967, CORDS granted an additional "special" aid of 100,000 dollars (19).

2. *Pacification Aid Program*, also called the CORDS program.

CORDS was established in 1967 and put under the direct command of MACV. US aid under the CORDS program is aimed at organizing, training, equipping and paying the Saigon militia, civil guard, and "Phoenix" groups. It also provides funds for the "chieu hoi" (20) program and other "pacification" activities of the Saigon administration.

Under the CORDS program, from 1968 to 1970, the US gave Saigon 2.1 billion dollars, not counting 300 million dollars of aid in Saigon currency taken from the "national fund." It

also paid the 13,300 employees of CORDS, nearly half of whom were military personnel. In 1971, the US granted a direct aid of 700 million dollars, the equivalent of 91.6 million dollars in Saigon currency taken from the "national funds," also under the CORDS program. In reality, the pacification aid program is much bigger than this, because the US considers it a strategic measure of prime importance to oppose the "people's war" waged by the South Vietnamese revolutionary forces. That is why the US is prepared to pour in all its manpower and wealth to bring it to success. Many other grants have been made by the US under this heading which have not so far been made public.

### 3. Refugee Aid Program.

This program began in 1965 under the responsibility of USAID and later under CORDS. It is essentially aimed at helping the Saigon administration force the people into concentration camps and strategic hamlets to facilitate control and coercion and secure a source of manpower to replenish the Saigon armed forces. Under this program, the US supplied Saigon with about 100 million dollars between 1967 and 1970. Besides, it gave aid in Saigon currency from the "counterpart fund," and in food under the "food for peace" program, and in goods, medicine, etc., under other forms of economic aid.

### 4. Public Works Program and Technical Support Program.

These two programs have been actively carried out ever since 1965, when US troops were first massively introduced into South Viet Nam. The amount of aid supplied by USAID and the Defense Department was used to build such big military ports as Saigon, Da Nang, Cam Ranh, Nha Trang, Vung Tau, etc., a system of strategic roads and bridges, railroads, a network of military communications, garrisons, and domestic conveniences, electricity and water supply in military and housing areas.

At present, these roads and ports are used for military purposes, but in the US calculations, they will serve US future economic penetration, investment, exploitation, and construction after the cessation of hostilities. The total amount of aid has not been ascertained because the aid

items are too complicated and are concealed by the US and the Saigon administration. According to the "Aid Congressional Presentation," only these figures (in millions of dollars) are known:

Items	Fiscal year		
	1971	1972 estimate	1973 proposed
Public works (engineering)	8.5	5.5	15.8
Technical support	29.8	26.9	22.2

Another kind of aid, not less important, of the US economic aid to Saigon is the Commercial [commodity] Import Program (CIP). It is a grant-aid of foreign currency (US dollars) given to the Saigon administration so that it may import goods from the US and "allies" designated by the US. Thanks to this aid, the Saigon administration can cover its international payment for annual imports, which far exceed its exports (21), it can also secure a direct income for its budget in the following manner:

— The US supplies dollars for Saigon to import goods approved by the US.

— Importers, authorized by the Saigon administration and approved by the US, can pay in Saigon currency at the official rate of exchange. This money is deposited in the "counterpart fund" at the Saigon National Bank, to be used by the Saigon administration mostly for military purposes.

— The Saigon administration levies import-taxes and local taxes when the imported goods under CIP are sold to the population. The money derived from taxes is used for budget expenditure.

Before 1968, US aid under CIP amounted to about 200 million dollars a year. From 1969 to 1972 it reached roughly 400 million dollars a year. In 1973, it was 300 million dollars and the same figure is estimated for 1974. According to the data of the US Congress, the total US aid under CIP to Saigon from 1955 to 1972 amounted to nearly three billion dollars, and 376 million dollars in 1973 (22). However the Indochina Resource Center (No. 4, March 1, 1974), has worked

out that this aid reached 5,154.9 million dollars in ten years (1964—1974).

Another form of US economic aid to the Saigon administration is the "Food for Peace" program

through which the US Department of Agriculture supplies surplus food to Saigon. This food is sold or donated to "humanitarian" social or medical [Red Cross] organizations in Saigon. Formerly this aid program was called "Public Law 480" (PL 480) or "Agricultural Trade Development and Assistance Act of 1954" — an act intended for third world countries, particularly those which were short of food. PL 480 was renamed "Food for Peace" by President J.F. Kennedy in 1961.

"Food for Peace" is divided into three titles. Titles 2 and 3 are destined to provide "social relief" for victims of natural calamities, refugees, war victims, hungry people, victims of epidemics, etc. Title 1 accounts for 70 per cent of the "Food for Peace" and consists of US surplus food such as rice, wheat, sugar, milk, tobacco, etc. Saigon imports these commodities with the dollars supplied by USAID. In return, it pays back the US Treasury Account in local currency (the piastre). This is used by the US to "support" Saigon's military budget and to cover the expenditures of US services in South Viet Nam.

From 1965 to 1972, on the average the US provided 100 million dollars of aid per year under the "Food for Peace" program (Title 1); in 1973 it gave 143 million dollars, in 1974 280 million dollars. The Indochina Resource Center revealed that in ten years, from 1964 to 1974, 1,168 million dollars of "Food for Peace" were supplied to Saigon.

US "economic aid" to the Saigon administration also comes in the form of loans by the US International Development Fund

dead, this is twice the number of US casualties sustained during the Korean war.

"The budgetary cost of military personnel, supply and equipment and other supporting expenditures, for the fiscal years 1965 through 1973, in connection with the Viet Nam war was 128 billion dollars, or about 600 dollars for every American man, woman, and child.

"During the same 7-year period, the US has provided another nine billion dollars in military assistance to South Viet Nam [the Saigon Administration—*Ed.*] and 4 billion dollars in economic assistance.

"Over five million [about 30 per cent] of the population of South Viet Nam were in the refugee category during the past six years; through June 1972, over one million South Vietnamese civilians have been war casualties of which an estimated 325,000 were killed..." (24)

Apart from those Vietnamese who have laid down their lives on the battlefield, a US Senatorial fact-finding mission which came to South Viet Nam in 1973 to enquire about the war victims found that:

— 7,800,000 tons of bombs have been dropped by the US on Indochina, not counting an equal quantity of shells fired by the ground forces and the navy, and the quantity of toxic chemicals which destroyed millions of hectares of vegetation and crops.

— There are at present 300-600 million pounds of unexploded shells and mines scattered all over South Viet Nam and causing daily casualties to the population.

— Since 1965, over half of the South Vietnamese population — about 10 million people — have been obliged to change their places of residence, several times in many cases, and to become refugees.

— In South Viet Nam today there are 880,000 orphans or semi-orphans, 650,000 war widows, and about 181,000 people who are invalid, disabled, paralysed, blind or deaf.

— The political prisoners (approximately 200,000 — *Ed.*) have not yet been returned as stipulated by the Paris Agreement. Moreover, Thieu has recently put to jail thousands of "non-communists" opposing him. (From "Relief and Rehabilitation of War Victims in Indochina: One Year after the Cease-fire")

Of course, such figures and words, cannot reflect all the losses and sufferings of the Vietnamese and the American peoples in the long war in South Viet Nam the direct cause of which is US intervention.

In spite of the strong opposition of the US people and Congress, the previous Nixon administration and the present Ford administration pursued the policy of neo-colonialist aid to the Saigon administration in order to continue the war after the conclusion of the Paris Agreement. Secretary of State Henry Kissinger stated without ambiguity: "We would continue to provide the Republic of Viet Nam with the means necessary for its self-defense... and we believe it is important that we continue our support as long as it is needed." (25)

According to the US Senate Armed Services Committee, the US gave 3,492 billion dollars of weapons and war materials to the Thieu administration in the fiscal year 1973-74. USAID reported to the US Congress that in the fiscal year 1974-75 3,668 billion dollars of military aid would be granted to Indochina, the greater part of which would be reserved for the Saigon administration, not counting 1.8 billion dollars of US armament given to Saigon in May 1974, out of the US Government special funds, which Senator W. Fulbright had denounced. The previous Nixon administration and the present Ford administration have tried their hardest to persuade the US Congress to increase "economic aid" to the Thieu regime.

The Nguyen Van Thieu administration is the most elaborately organized neo-colonialist puppet mechanism of the US in South Viet Nam. It is a ruling group composed of bureaucrats, militarists and fascists at the service of the US. It represents the pro-American and most reactionary class of comprador capitalists and feudalist landlords in South Viet Nam. The interests of these elements are closely linked with the preservation of US neo-colonialism. They have enriched themselves thanks to the war, US military and economic aid, smuggling and black marketing, corruption, plundering and exploiting the people. Thieu and other brass-hats in South Viet Nam now have property worth from 100 to 1,000 million South Vietnamese piastres — and even more. They have turned South Viet Nam into

a typically American "garrison state" or "police state." Their existence and "prosperity" depend on repression and terror against the people combined with the endless mercenary war for the sake of the US. Nguyen Van Thieu himself stated that "We are the first to approve the Nixon doctrine, the first to welcome the Vietnamization of the war" (26) and that "We do not lack flesh and blood, we are ready to sacrifice our flesh and blood" (27) to pursue the war and to continue to be the instrument of US neo-colonialism in South Viet Nam.

With such a faithful puppet administration in control of a giant army and repressive machinery, the US thought that it could safely withdraw from South Viet Nam and that, simply by leaving a number of advisors and giving some billion dollars of aid a year to that administration it would be able to maintain South Viet Nam within the sphere of US neo-colonialism. Yet once again the US has miscalculated. Only one year and a half after the withdrawal of US troops, the Saigon administration is seriously weakened in all fields, political, military, and economic. No doubt, even though US aid has been increased, it cannot save the Saigon puppets from collapse in the face of the people's mighty struggle.

BUI THIEN MY

(17) In "US Assistance Programs in Viet Nam," p.20.

(18) FNC No 27, The Saigon Police, p.27.

(19) In "US Assistance Programs in Viet Nam," p.24.

(20) A form of US psychological warfare in South Viet Nam, "Open Arms" program (a call to return) for rallying resistance members.

(21) According to Saigon papers, Saigon annual exports are only 5-10% of its imports.

(22) In "US Assistance Programs in Viet Nam," p.9.

(23) Victor Perlo, The Viet Nam Profiteers, p. 14.

(24) In "US Assistance Programs in Viet Nam," p.4.

(25) In the March 25, 1974 letter to Senator E. Kennedy.

(26) Thieu's speech to the Saigon Parliament, Dec. 12, 1972.

(27) Thieu's speech at the Conference of Teachers, Saigon, June 6, 1974.

(Continued from page 25)  
the same content as the draft agreement presented two months earlier, in October 1972.

NGUYEN VINH LONG

(1) Jean Dupuis, *Les événements du Tonkin*, Paris, 1879, pp. 1 and 2.

(2) Liu Yung-fu was the leader of the patriotic army of the Chinese people which had risen up to oppose the Tsing Court and the exactions of European capitalists. After its defeat it sought refuge in Viet Nam large numbers of Vietnamese patriots joined its ranks.

(3) Jean Dupuis, *ib.*, p. 200.

(4) Hoang Dieu, "Plea to the King" from "Patriotic Literature of Viet Nam in the Second Half of the 19th Century." Literature Publishing House, Hanoi, 1970.

(5) Dong Kinh Nghia Thuc was a school founded by a group of progressive scholars in Hanoi in March 1907. It called for a national revolution to be carried out by developing culture and education, and spreading scientific and technological knowledge as a basis for eventual political liberation.

(6) The Poisoning Affair in Hanoi: a number of scholars, in co-ordination with patriotic native soldiers stationed in the Hanoi citadel, and in contact with the insurgent forces led by Hoang Hoa Tham at Yen The (Thai Nguyen province), planned to organize a mass poisoning of French troops garrisoned in the

citadel and afterward a concerted uprising to seize the citadel.

(7) The Coq d'Or bomb attack: On April 26, 1913 while a group of French officers were holding a banquet in this hotel (which is now the Dan Chu (Democracy) Hotel, in Trang Tien Street, a worker of the Gia Lam Railway Factory, Nguyen Van Tuy, hurled in a bomb from the street.

(8) President Ho Chi Minh's "Appeal for Nation-wide Resistance", December 20, 1946.

(9) Statement by Robert Markham Hudson, Second Lieutenant and B-52 pilot, captured in Hanoi on December 26, 1972.

## BOOK NOTES

**Tieu Thuyet Viet Nam Hien Dai - Tap I** (Modern Vietnamese Novels - Vol. I) by Phan Cu De; University and Vocational Secondary Education Publishing House, Hanoi, 1974, 13x19cm, 406 pages.

A study on the development of Vietnamese novels over the past fifty years.

**Truyen va Ky** (Stories and Notes) by Nguyen Ai Quoc; Literature Publishing House Hanoi, 1974; 13x19cm, 84 pages.

A collection of 6 essays around the theme of revolutionary struggle. They were written in French by President Ho Chi Minh under the pen-name of Nguyen Ai Quoc during his revolutionary activities in the period 1922-1925. The first part of the book contains an introduction and Vietnamese translation by Pham Huy Thong and the second part gives the French text of the original articles.

**Trai S.T.18** (Camp S.T.18) by Phan Tu; Youth Publishing House, Hanoi, 1974; 13x19cm, 220 pages.

A novel in diary form about a prisoner-of-war camp for captured US troops in South Viet Nam. The author probes the inner thoughts and world outlook of two different generations of youth - the South Vietnamese Liberation fighters and the American prisoners of war detained at the camp.

**60 Ngay o Saigon** (60 Days in Saigon) by Thanh Tin; Literature Publishing House, Hanoi, 1974; 13x19cm, 116 pages.

A diary of the 60 days (January 29, 1973 - March 31, 1973) when the author was working in Saigon as a DRVN army officer in the Four-Party Joint Military Commission.

**Bai Ca Trang Sang** (Moonlight Ballads) by Ma Van Khang; Literature Publishing House,

Hanoi, 1974 13x19cm, 220 pages.

A collection of 9 short stories about Vietnamese highlanders in their production work and fighting.

**Tho - II** (Poems - Vol. II) by Song Hong; Literature Publishing House, Hanoi, 1974; 13x18cm, 112 pages.

A collection of 35 poems written over the past 10 years by a Vietnamese revolutionary leader on the revolutionary struggle of the people in North and South Viet Nam.

**Theo Nhịp Thang Ngay** (Rhythm of Life) by Te Hanh; Literature Publishing House, Hanoi, 1974; 13x19cm, 130 pages.

A collection of 45 poems written in the years 1970-1974, by a well-known contemporary poet on nature and the problems facing man in struggle and construction.

**Tho giai thuong bao Van Nghe 1972 - 1973** (Prize-winning Poems in the 1972-1973 Poetry Contest Organized by the Literature and Art Review) by several authors; Literature Publishing House, Hanoi, 1974; 12x19cm, 110 pages.

A collection of 39 poems by 19 authors such as Lam Thi My Da, Hoang Nhuan Cam, Nguyen Duy, Nguyen Duc Mau who were awarded prizes in the poetry contest organized by the Literature and Art Review in 1972-1973. The book contains an introduction by the contest judging panel entitled: "A Year's Poems of Youth and Life."



# CHRONOLOGY

(Continued from page 32)

big victories: they defeated many large-scale operations, wiped out or captured 60,652 enemy troops and seized 12,241 fire-arms. Over 40,000 people living in enemy-held areas left for the liberated zone.

2. An anti-Thieu demonstration was held at Chinh Tam church, Hoai Duc village, Binh Tuy province, 112km east of Saigon. 200 armed policemen attacked the demonstrators, killing 3, including Nguyen Duc Luong, 19, and injuring a dozen others; the church was destroyed and many dwelling-houses burnt. The demonstrators took hostage the lieutenant-colonel in charge of Hoai Duc district and declared that he would only be released if the Thieu administration settle the question satisfactorily.

— Ending of the visit which began on October 31 of the Vice-Chairman of the Hungarian Council of Ministers, Janos Brobandi, to the liberated zone of South Viet Nam. Signing of an agreement for non-repayable aid for 1975 by Hungary to the PRG of the RSVN.

3. An economic and financial delegation of the Royal Government of National Union of Cambodia headed by Mr Ieng Sary, special advisor to the Vice-Premier of the RGNUC, ended a friendship visit to the DRVN begun on October 28, 1974.

— 200 personalities held a teach-in at An Quang pagoda on the political situation in South Viet Nam. An opposition deputy attacked Thieu for wantonly shedding the blood of the people by continuing the war and condemned the Ford administration for supporting Thieu.

— *Reuter*: A petition was signed by 50 deputies demanding the immediate resignation of Nguyen Van Thieu.

4. The Hungarian Government Delegation to the Viet Nam — Hungary Commission for Economic, Scientific and Technical Co-operation left Hanoi after signing documents on economic, scientific and technical co-operation between the two countries.

6. Mrs Ngo Ba Thanh, President of the Women's Association for the Right to Live, issued a communiqué denouncing Thieu's "policy of repression and liquidation of the Third Political Force" and condemning Thieu for putting his men to surround her residence.

— In a communiqué the Saigon administration threatened to jail anyone distributing or popularizing opposition documents, and banned all demonstrations and meetings.

7. The Lao Patriotic Forces returned 38 captured soldiers to the Vientiane side.

— *AFP*: In the last two years, over 1,000 Lon Nol officers have been trained in Thailand.

8. In an open letter to Nguyen Van Thieu, the President of the Saigon Lawyers' Association protested against the police action on October 31 preventing lawyers from entering the Ministry of Justice to do their work.

— The Saigon opposition deputies sent messages to the American Congress and a number of other countries condemning Nguyen Van Thieu for using US aid to repress the population.

11 — 44 Saigon deputies issued a statement denouncing Thieu's policy of repression against parliamentarians, religious dignitaries and the population and holding the US government responsible for this state of things.

12. The GDR Government Delegation to the Viet Nam — GDR Commission for Economic, Scientific and Technical Co-operation left Hanoi after signing documents on economic, scientific and technical co-operation and exchanges of goods in 1975.

— Speaking at the Ministry of Information, Nguyen Van Thieu, once again, railed at the third political force and declared he would leave no stone unturned to oppose it. He declared that "the priests should carry out their activities in their churches, the bonzes in their pagodas, the deputies in the National Assembly and legislators enjoy immunity only in their offices."

— Lon Nol brought pressure to bear on the National Assembly to renew the "special powers" granted him in April 1973 for another six months.

14. Thieu's "National Assembly" passed the "law and regulations on the press" in which only provisions of secondary importance were amended while the main content of Law 007 remained unchanged. Fifty opposition deputies and representatives of the press immediately held a demonstration in front of the "National Assembly" building demanding the abolition of this law.

— Ton That Chuoc, Thieu's Vice-Minister of National Defence, declared before the Saigon National Assembly that the defence budget for 1975 amount to 348.5 billion piastres, representing nearly 50% of the whole budget (825 billion).

15. All Saigon newspapers except for three belonging to the Thieu clique published a resolution of the Journalists' Association announcing a two-day suspension of publication and condemning Thieu's continuing repressive policy against the press.

# CHRONOLOGY

(October 16 — November 15, 1974)

## OCTOBER

16. Samdech Head of State Norodom Sihanouk condemned the US for persuading a number of its satellite countries to present a motion asking the UNO to postpone restoration of the legitimate position of the Royal Government of National Union of Cambodia in this world body.

17. A Saigon air force private named Ho Vuong Tuan paraded in front of the Saigon "National Assembly" building with a placard reading "I have no confidence in President Nguyen Van Thieu."

— 17,000 people of Quang Ngai attended a meeting to protest against Thieu's dictatorship and corruption on the occasion of the formation of the Quang Ngai "National Reconciliation Forces."

— In Paris, many French and foreign economists and personalities held an "open conference" to oppose the "secret conference" of the US-controlled World Bank which has been discussing a "multilateral aid" programme for the Nguyen Van Thieu regime.

18. A Republic of South Viet Nam Information, Literature and Art Delegation led by Minister Luu Huu Phuoc began a visit to North Viet Nam.

20. The "Organization of Saigon Newspaper Proprietors" adopted a resolution calling on all Saigon papers not to carry any news given by the Nguyen Van Thieu administration as from October 21.

— A day-long demonstration was held in Saigon with the participation of many Buddhist bonzes, Catholic priests, deputies and senators. Shouting "Down with Thieu" the demonstrators set a police car on fire and burnt many portraits of Thieu. Clashes took place between the demonstrators and the police.

24. In face of popular indignation, Thieu was forced to accept the resignation of four of his closest ministers including Hoang Duc Nha, Minister of Information.

26. Thieu's planes bombed the centre of Loc Ninh town, destroying the town's airport runway and a nearby pagoda. This is now the fifteenth time that Loc Ninh has been bombed.

27. The economic delegation of the Czechoslovak Government to the Viet Nam — Czechoslovakia Commission for Economic, Scientific and Technical Co-operation left Hanoi after signing documents on economic, scientific and technical co-operation and on exchanges of goods between the two countries for 1975.

28. The DRVN Government Economic Delegation led by Vice Premier Le Thanh Nghi left Peking for home after signing an agreement on non-repayable economic and military aid from the People's Republic of China to the DRVN in 1975.

30. 200 Saigon lawyers supported the "Organization of Saigon Newspaper Proprietors" in demanding the impeachment of Hoang Duc Nha.

— Thieu demoted three out of the four Army Corps commanders.

— A Saigon Vice-Premier and five more ministers handed in their resignation.

— The That Luong Fair in Vientiane came to an end after lasting fifteen days. It was the first time that the DRVN had participated in this fair. The King of Laos Sri Savang Vatthana had visited the DRVN Section at the fair and hailed the achievements of the Vietnamese people in the building of their country which, he said, were clearly shown in the quality of the exhibits.

— On the night of October 30, over 5,000 Catholics held a torchlight demonstration against Thieu at Tan Sa Chau in the suburbs of Saigon. The next morning they broke through the police cordon and thronged into Saigon. Several other mass demonstrations were staged at the same time in other places in Saigon to demand the immediate resignation of Thieu. Thieu sent in 100,000 armed police to suppress the demonstrators and bloody clashes took place between them and the police. Nearly 100 people were injured including many Catholic priests, Buddhist bonzes, deputies, senators and journalists.

— Thieu sacked 224 high-ranking field officers.

## NOVEMBER

1. Apart from three papers belonging to the Thieu clique, all Saigon papers suspended publication in support of the "Victimized Press Day."

— General Duong Van Minh condemned Thieu as a shameless and blood-thirsty dictator and demanded the formation of a new leading team.

— Prince Souvanna Phouma, Prime Minister of the Provisional Government of National Union of Laos, returned to Vientiane after a two-month medical treatment in France.

— AKI: In the rainy season of 1974 (May-October) the Cambodian patriotic forces won

(Continued on page 31)